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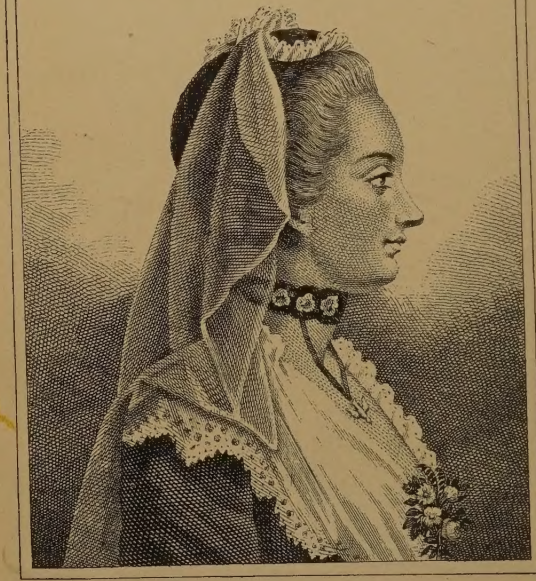

Carmontelle pinx. *Verrau sc.*

Mlle DE L'ESPINASSE

Amie de Dalembert.

Julie de Lespinasse
By the Marquis de Ségur
Translated from the French and Published at New York by E. P. Dutton & Company

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INTRODUCTION

One summer afternoon in the year 1811 Madame de Staël was returning from an excursion down the Chambéry valley, when the failing conversation of her party drifted to a recent book of which the reputation was already in the ascendant. Talk suddenly became animated. Madame de Stael was the first to take fire, and her brilliant words held all hearers by their charm. A storm broke over the carriage, but neither for wind, hail, nor lightning had any of its occupants attention to spare. One subject possessed every sense—the volume of Letters of Mademoiselle de Lespinasse which the widow of Count Guibert had given to the world a few months earlier.

The anecdote may serve in some degree to indicate the profound interest excited in the literary world, almost from the moment of their first publication, by pages that revived, as it were gave a second life to, the soul of a woman dead these thirty years and whose name was scarcely known to the new generation. Little less than a complete century has since passed, but the accents of this voice from the grave are still to be heard.

Like Madame de Staël and her fellow-travellers, we feel our hearts beat in response to the tumults of this heart; we experience the sad charm of these burning lines, the very disorder and contradictions in which so convincingly reflect their passionate origin that one may apply to them the words of Lamartine, well used of the letters of another Julie, where, in his "Raphael," he says: *Her very breath was in the words, her eyes glanced up from the lines; one felt through the phrases the living warmth of the lips from which they had just fallen.*[1]

By these artless letters, with their unstudied style,—frequently, indeed, lacking any style in the grammatical sense of that term,—the spontaneous overflow from the deeps of her soul, and so little intended for alien eyes that she particularly enjoined their destruction, Julie de Lespinasse has found her unexpected place in the history of literature. Successive editions confirm the lasting interest of this correspondence, yet all follow the text as originally printed by Madame de Guibert, incomplete, abridged, and full of suppressions as it is, if only because of the reticence natural in a woman to whose husband the originals were addressed.

The personality of Mademoiselle de Lespinasse has excited a similar curiosity in the wider public, and various biographers have described her appearance, outlined her character, and traced the principal events of her romantic career. Their works

[1] Julie des Hérettes, immortalised by the poet as *Elvira*.

have, in a word, popularised a portrait of which, if it be possible, the attractions are enhanced, in that it may be taken as representative of an epoch, a symbol of the revolution accomplished in contemporary thought during the period of Julie's life—the change of the age of reason into the age of passion and sentimental licence.

But notwithstanding the undoubted interest of some of these volumes, no single one has failed to impress me by the extensive intermissions and the numerous obscurities to be encountered by all who would study the history of Mademoiselle de Lespinasse. Her birth, youth, and education; that first passion, which, as she herself testifies, exercised so decisive an influence on her life,—all remain vague, enveloped in mists, frequently buried in impenetrable obscurity. The very episode of her passion for Guibert and the connection between the pair—the essential subject of the published Letters—can be followed only in the most imperfect and summary manner. We can see her blind adoration for "the great man," the adored of contemporary society; learn how cruelly she suffered from his coldness and infidelities; watch her fall a prey to disillusionment and despair after but a few years. But the real lights to be gained upon the circumstances of this love-story, or its successive phases, are rare, and it does not need much study to perceive that the several accounts of the few indubitable landmarks frequently differ in detail.

A happy accident first afforded me most precious light upon this last crisis in the history of Mademoiselle de Lespinasse, when I learned that the rich family archives of Guibert's descendants contained the originals of the famous letters. Count de Villeneuve-Guibert opened this door to me with a courtesy which I can never sufficiently acknowledge. Himself appreciating the value of his inheritance as well as any one, the Count allowed me to read the very sheets penned by Julie, without alteration or suppression. Here, also, are numerous other letters, pages of a livelier or more intimate tone, withheld from publication when the rest were printed for reasons then of sufficient weight, although now without a claim to consideration. The sheets overflow with nervous life and gain additional interest from the considerable packet of Guibert's replies which accompanies them. They afford us an almost uninterrupted view of the most secret motions of a sincere and exalted soul. These priceless documents, the first as the most substantial reward of my curiosity, encouraged me to further research. I am happy to be able to announce their imminent publication under the supervision of their enlightened owner.

My next effort was to elucidate the remaining obscurities in this story of many troubles, and evidence was not long in arising from the dust of ancient archives with a lavishness exceeding my most ardent hopes. The birth, education, and

intimate existence of Julie were displayed in letters exchanged with one of her brothers, no less than in notes, letters, and the manuscript journals of certain of her relatives—hitherto unprinted documents which I consulted in the library of the town of Roanne, or among the family papers of the Marquis de Vichy and the Marquis d'Albon, virgin riches put at my disposal with a liberality and kindliness beyond measure. Other side-lights on the same early period I have gained from the memoirs and intimate papers of Madame de la Ferté Imbault, for permission to draw on which I am once again indebted to the Marquis d'Estampes.

A like good fortune followed my efforts to unravel the mystery hitherto veiling Julie's first love and her relations with the Marquis de Mora. Thanks to the kindly offices of the Marquis d'Alcedo, I obtained communication of documents from the muniment-room of the house of Villa-Hermosa, which define the hitherto shadowy personality of the man who played his part in this touching episode.

Finally, in respect of the friends and familiars of Mademoiselle de Lespinasse, her salon, and the public and more worldly side of her character, Mademoiselle Valentine Stapfer hospitably made me free of the rich archives preserved in her château at Talcy; while I owe similar acknowledgments to Monsieur Charles Henry, discoverer and printer of the "Unpublished Letters." Numerous

works, especially on David Hume, consulted in the Library of the British Museum, complete the list of original sources on which I have drawn to any great extent.

Before, now, proceeding to my work, I would only thank the many friends who have aided me with their encouragement and advice. To all of these I hereby tender sincere thanks, particularly to Monsieur Gaston Boissier, Count de Rochambeau, and Monsieur Joseph Déchelette.

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Public Archives.—MSS. in the library at Roanne; MSS. in the Bibliothèque Nationale; Municipal and Departmental archives at Lyons; Departmental Archives of Mâcon; MSS. in the Library of the British Museum, and elsewhere.

JULIE DE LESPINASSE

CHAPTER I

Master Basiliac's client—Birth of Julie de Lespinasse—Her father—Early years at the Château d'Avauges—Maternal distress of the Countess d'Albon—Her death—Julie at the Château de Champrond—Her younger brother, Abel de Vichy—Family scenes and quarrels—Julie desires to take the veil—Madame du Deffand.

In the heart of the city of Lyons, and fronting the quays which line the right bank of the Saône, rise the great buildings of a picture gallery. Originally known by the name of Grand Custom-House Place, the space thus filled was up to quite recent times the site of the old Custom House. Here, about the year 1730, master Louis Basiliac, "official surgeon to the Marshal," occupied a modest tenement with his wife, dame Madeleine Ganivet, a professional midwife. The quarter was unfashionable, and the neighbours were almost exclusively of the lower middle and artisan classes, but known honesty and a lengthy practice seem to have gained the surgeon a considerable local reputation.

To this discreet house and respectable couple there came a client one November evening in the year 1732. A face of refined sweetness, extreme youth and beauty, no less than a style of dress,

manners, and speech very different from those of the Basiliacs' usual patrons, conspired to surround the visitor with an air of tantalising mystery. The newcomer left her hosts little time for speculation, since already on the 9th of the month she was delivered of a girl child, more frail and of less size than usual, but perfectly sound and of the liveliest disposition. She was baptized next day in the neighbouring church of Saint Paul, Basiliac and his wife standing godfather and godmother. The names of two other witnesses are unknown. The entry in the Register, from the hand of Rector Ambrose himself, may be printed here in full, since no correct transcription has yet been published.

> "This 10th of November 1732 was baptized Julie Jeanne Eléonore de Lespinasse, born yesterday, legitimate daughter of Claude Lespinasse, burgher of Lion, and of dame Julie Navarre his wife. Godfather, master Louis Basiliac, licensed surgeon of Lyon; godmother, dame Madeleine Ganivet, wife of said Basiliac, *vice* dame Julie Lechot absent. Lacking the father's signature through absence, two witnesses attest with their signatures in addition to those of godfather and godmother. In witness whereof
>
> "BASILIAC—AMBROSE, *Rector*."

At a later date, in a different ink, an unknown hand has inserted *il* before "legitimate," while the words *his wife* are ruled out, and the margin is marked with a cross, the particular sign used in this register to denote the issue of irregular unions.

Claude l'Espinasse and Julie Navarre, the parents assigned, are purely fictitious personages of whom no trace has ever existed in the

city registers. Claude and Julie are, however, the Christian names of a certain great lady, at that time an object of universal attention among the scandal-mongers of Lyons. The name of l'Espinasse is, further, that of an estate brought into the d'Albon family during the fifteenth century by the marriage of [1] Alix de l'Espinasse with William d'Albon, seigneur de Saint-Forgeux. Master Basiliac's client was, thus, at little pains to disguise her identity when she caused the doctor to register her daughter's baptism in this fashion.

Few will be ignorant of the antiquity and fame of the house of d'Albon. From the twelfth century onwards its members give frequent governors to Dauphiny, while its power and wealth were such that one of its chroniclers can record how there was once a question "whether its lands should not be constituted a kingdom, since indeed they are as a kingdom in size." Among the many scions of this warlike house, who have left their name in our history,[2] Marshal Saint-André, a hero of the religious wars, killed gloriously at the battle of Dreux, is undoubtedly the most famous.

In the opening years of the eighteenth century the house was divided into two branches, the Counts of Saint-Marcel and the Marquisses of Saint-Forgeux, either being represented by an only child —Claude d'Albon, Count of Saint-Marcel, born at

[1] Contemporary Memoirs and legal documents make no attempt at a uniform spelling of the name. l'Espinasse, de Lespinasse, and even Lespinasse, with no prefix, are found together. I have, throughout, adopted Julie's own autograph of *de Lespinasse*.

[2] Jacques d'Albon, Marshal Saint-André, 1524–1562.

Roanne on June 25, 1687, and Julie Claude Hilaire d'Albon, born at Lyons on July 28, 1695. This girl, motherless from the age of three, and thenceforward cared for only by a father whose life appears to have been most unedifying, rightly passed for one of the richest heiresses in the country, being heir-presumptive through her father to the Marquisate of Saint-Forgeux, while from her mother she inherited the principality of Yvetot. She already bore this last title, and since the revenues attached formed a considerable dowry in themselves one can easily conceive that both branches of the family joined hands in the common hope of uniting such fair estates in the person of a d'Albon. Questions of compatibility or choice, on the part of those principally concerned, presented no problem to parents of that period. The idea of a marriage between the cousins was carried out as soon as conceived. The Archbishop of Lyons gave the necessary dispensation; the contract was signed at the Château d'Avauges on February 10, 1711, and a few weeks later saw the marriage solemnised at Lyons.

Julie d'Albon was sixteen when her future was thus arranged. An interesting portrait in the Château d'Avauges, painted a few years later, shows us a young woman of slight but active figure, with an oval face of refined features, and light brown hair. The black eyes, of a softly languishing aspect, impart a dreamy quality to the entire face. A certain length in the nose mars features otherwise beautiful in a regular style, but the dominant impression to be derived from this por-

trait is that of extreme sweetness; its melancholy, in the language of that day its "touching," expression suggests a spirit already resigned to the troubles that the future is to bring.

The early years of this marriage, even if imperfectly happy, were none the less free of any disaster. Several children prove the reality of the married tie; a daughter, Marie Camille Diane, was born in 1716. Two others died in infancy. Finally, on November 11, 1724, came the son, Camille Alix Eléonor Marie, whose birth, long and impatiently awaited, was to assure the perpetuity of the race. But from this moment trouble begins, and does not end until all community of existence concludes in a definite separation.

No effort has yet succeeded in illuminating the obscurity which clings alike to the causes and circumstances of this separation. It may, however, be inferred that the first fault lay with the man, and that his fault was grave. That guardianship of the two children was, from the first, entrusted to the Countess d'Albon seems eloquent proof of this supposition, no less than the fact that she kept them with her to the day of her death. Whatever her later conduct may have been, and it was surely such as would have justified protest by the count, the latter never raised an objection or criticism. He established himself in the town of Roanne, dying there in 1771, after an obscure and retired existence. The silence of this retirement was broken by no effort on his part, nor did he ever attempt to assert a claim on the life of his family.

The Countess d'Albon, meanwhile, continued to reside on her estates, more generally at the Château d'Avauges, sometimes in her house at Lyons. Quasi-widowed at the age of thirty, beautiful, sensitive, and of the romantic disposition clearly indicated by what little we know of her, it was easy to prophesy that her heart would find some kind of distraction. Nor was the event long delayed, for she presently conceived an attachment no less serious and lasting than it was almost publicly avowed, as was the custom of the day. The period is, indeed, one in which the majority of her sex found virtue to consist in the possession of no more than one lover at a time, and morality in faithfulness to him. A species of handbook for women, or a guide to the conscience, written by one of them at about this date, contains these ingenuous lines: "If our lady have a lover is not the question, but 'who is the lover?'" A woman's reputation hangs on the reply to this. Dishonour, to-day, may lie "in the object, but never in the attachment." A passage in Bachaumont's memoirs is even more original. Calmly debating the probabilities in respect of his own paternity, he decides in favour of a cousin, a particular friend of his mother, on the ground that a close physical resemblance is seldom fortuitous. But, whatever the real facts, and however erroneous contemporary gossip, local scandal never hesitated to couple the names of Madame d'Albon and a certain man. Madame du Deffand categorically asserts that "no one is ignorant" of this romance.

Julie de Lespinasse was, as already detailed, the child of this attachment, but she was neither the only one nor the first. On June 14, 1731, Madame d'Albon became the mother of a son who, at his baptism in the parish of Saint-Nizier at Lyons, received her own first name of Hilaire, and was registered as "son of John Hubert, merchant, and of Catherine Blando." The child has no place in this chronicle. Reared secretly in some unknown monastery within the city, on April 13, 1750, being then eighteen, this lad followed his mother's express desire, and assumed the habit of a novice in the Franciscan Convent of Saint Bonaventure. His mother's efforts having secured him a portion of several thousands of pounds, he took the vows next year, and, although no evidence is forthcoming in either sense, it seems probable that he lived his life out in the peaceful oblivion of the cloisters. Hilaire was twenty months old when this history opens with his sister's birth in the house of master Basiliac.

The paternity of these children is a delicate question which has defied the efforts of all Julie's biographers. The absolute silence of contemporary writers of memoirs upon this point can only be set down to their equal ignorance. The name of Mademoiselle de Lespinasse did not acquire notoriety until the third of a century had overlaid the scandal, while the Countess d'Albon had been dead these twenty years. At the time of the intrigue, it was doubtless one of many subjects for local gossip; it occurred in the provinces, and

provincial scandals had not yet found ready access to Parisian ears. The persons interested were, moreover, eminently in a position to guard their own secrets.

Bachaumont alone attempts to lift the veil. Immediately after Julie's death we find this bold announcement in his pages: "We now know that Mademoiselle de Lespinasse was the illegitimate daughter of Cardinal de Tencin, just as d'Alembert is the bastard of Madame de Tencin—an identity in origin and species of origin which explains the later connection of the pair." It is unfortunate that so ingenuous an explanation commands no sort of credence. The cardinal was fifty-two years old at the date of Julie's birth, an age which disposes of the story when the state of his health at the time is also remembered. His then residence was a hundred miles from Lyons, and not until ten years later did he remove to that city, while, as Archbishop of Embrun, his energies were so entirely absorbed by a struggle with his suffragan, Soanen, Bishop of Senez, a main pillar of Jansenism, that he certainly could not have found leisure for such intrigues. Finally, the letters of Madame du Deffand, since published, contain a sufficient refutation of the legend. "The Cardinal de Tencin," she writes, while speaking of Mademoiselle de Lespinasse, "met her when on a recent visit to me, and at once asked me who she was. I found no difficulty in telling him under the seal of confidence." Bachaumont's statement is certainly without further foundation than the two facts

that d'Alembert and Julie occupied the same house, and were of like uncertain birth. While the world was thus free to imagine its own story, with every probability of never arriving at the truth, a fortunate chance turned my attention to an entirely new quarter, and if the hypothesis now advanced is incapable of proof, it still wears every appearance of reality.

A passage in my "Kingdom of the Rue Saint-Honoré" dwelt upon the long and intimate friendship uniting Madame Geoffrin and Mademoiselle de Lespinasse. Throughout the long period of some twelve years, the latter was little less than a member of the famous household in the Rue Saint-Honoré, paying its aged mistress long daily visits, and finding in her the wisest counsellor, most generous protector, almost a second mother. If ever the younger woman confided in a human being, this discreet and sure friend received those confidences, and we can deem it nothing else than natural if Madame de la Ferté Imbault, Madame Geoffrin's daughter, has revealed the riddle of Julie's birth. The pages of the private diary, which this lady was nightly accustomed to fill with personal jottings and such interesting matters as chanced to have reached her during the past day, among many passages about her mother's friend contain these two: "She is the illegitimate daughter of the Countess d'Albon by Madame du Deffand's brother," and again, "Madame du Deffand's illegitimate niece."

Madame du Deffand's maiden-name was Marie

de Vichy Champrond. Of her two known brothers, one, much younger than herself, forswore the world at an early age and died canon-treasurer of La Sainte Chapelle at Paris. The remaining brother, Gaspard III. de Vichy, born at Champrond in 1695, and his sister's senior by two years, is the only one to whom these notes can apply.

The Counts of Vichy were a family of old and high nobility, long established in Forez and the Mâconnais. Among the family's many excellent marriages, one of the most recent was an alliance with their neighbours, the d'Albons. By this marriage Hilaire d'Albon became the wife of Count Gaspard de Vichy, great-grandfather of Madame du Deffand and her brother. Such close relationship, and the proximity of their estates, naturally led to constant intercourse between the two families, and if Julie d'Albon and Gaspard de Vichy, cousins of like age and close neighbours, conceived a mutual liking, the fact need not surprise us. The one apparent objection to this hypothesis is capable of an equally natural solution. Gaspard, first commissioned at the age of twenty, and employed in all the campaigns of the first half of Louis XV.'s reign, was certainly away from home during long periods. But the years 1727 and 1733, the period in which Julie's affairs came to a crisis, exactly correspond with an interval of peace during which the wanderer was at home, and had ample leisure for such an intrigue as that bluntly recorded by Madame de la Ferté Imbault.

Even a double assertion of this kind by Madame

Geoffrin's daughter might be questioned, did not strong circumstantial evidence point to its accuracy. It would be hard to conceive a more natural explanation of the immediate and singular interest taken by Madame du Deffand in a young girl, thrown in her way by the chance of a brief residence in the country. It accounts for the heat with which she overrides all opposition to taking her young friend to Paris, and the immediate place found by her in her protector's own household. It explains the zeal of this protector in discouraging all inquiry into the mystery of the girl's birth; her rage and violent indignation, when she afterwards imagines herself betrayed, not by the stranger whom a common arrangement has brought to share her life, but a woman of her own blood for whom she has been at pains to contrive a home and a place in the family. I will not here anticipate the future further than to note the extraordinary resemblance displayed in the character, tastes, and intellect of the pair, points of which there can be no explanation so natural as kinship, but pass to the evidence afforded by the letters of Mademoiselle de Lespinasse herself.

Certain of Julie's letters to Guibert and Condorcet contain passages hitherto scarcely intelligible, at best wearing every appearance of morbid overemphasis. In this strain she writes to the former: "One day I will tell you such tales as are not to be found in the novels either of Prévost or Richardson. The compound of unhappy circumstances that make up my history has taught me that the

truth is often too utterly incredible. . . . Oh, but I can tell you that men are cruel! Tigers are kind by comparison!" The same tragic note runs through this to Condorcet: "I, who have known nothing but pain and suffering, I, who have suffered *atrocities* at the very hands from which I should have looked for nothing but gentleness!"

These are strong expressions to apply to the, unhappily too common, situation of the child born out of wedlock, and suffering for the fault of which it is guiltless. But, call Gaspard de Vichy her father, and we have a key to the woe. In 1736, being then forty years of age, and Julie seven, this man married Marie Camille Diane, the Countess d'Albon's legitimate daughter, and his junior by twenty years. Such a marriage with the daughter of a former mistress, however reprehensible in itself, is not without parallel, especially at this epoch. But the situation becomes complicated when the child of the earlier and unlawful connection is reared under an assumed name by a mother who wishes to acknowledge her but dares not, and in full view of the father, also a brother-in-law, whose interests are consequently in direct opposition to those of his natural daughter. It is not difficult to imagine what unhappy conflicts and miserable pangs were the inevitable result of such confusion.

Of what little we know of Gaspard de Vichy's character, nothing unhappily discredits these horrors. With the single exception of the "Abbé de Champrond"—the simple and good-natured trea-

surer of La Sainte Chapelle—every Vichy in this generation, Madame du Deffand or Madame d'Aulan no less than their brothers, exhibits the same characteristics and is cast in the like mould. All are spirited above the ordinary, cultivated and attractive; but they are, also, hard and opinionated egoists, cynical in speech and unscrupulous in act. "Certainly," writes a contemporary, with every reason to know them, "they are a unique collection. Our poor abbé has an eminently kind heart, but I doubt the rest are not sure whether they possess such an organ." And this criticism is the sad confidence of Gaspard's wife to her children!

No discussion on the point of Julie's birth can close without a reference to the documents, put in my hands by a fortunate chance. The marriage of Count de Vichy with Diane d'Albon found issue in a son, Abel Marie Claude, a boy, as already set out, at once the brother and nephew of Mademoiselle de Lespinasse. This boy, her junior by eight years, presently became the object of her particular affection. A mass of letters, written by Julie to her brother—correspondence hitherto unknown, but one of the chief authorities for much in the present volume—exhibits the unmistakable note of an elder sister's loving care. Claiming no open confession of the sentiment, their writer displays a sweet and motherly concern, the sense that it is both her right and duty to watch over one whose happiness, she constantly repeats, "is dearer and more precious to me than anything else in the world." This affection stands out the more clearly by contrast to her in-

difference, not to say hostility, to all that touches a d'Albon, a note only too clearly apparent in such sarcasm as tinges these lines to the same brother. "It seems to me that you see little, if anything, of your d'Albon relations, or does this mean that your affection for them is on the same scale? It would be a natural feeling enough!" The same note is yet more apparent in this: "You fail to tell me if the little d'Albon still continues to aspire to a monastery, or will solve the problem by dying in a decline. He would be a great loss—his face at all events." But the same writer becomes almost passionate where her subject is Gaspard de Vichy's son. Every circumstance of his life calls out fresh interest, his wife when he marries, "the children, whom I love to distraction." She is his mentor in all the thousand chances of life—his career, his attitude towards the family, even his investments. She takes infinite pains to push his promotion while in the army, to obtain for him the Cross of Saint Louis, when he retires. Ill and shivering with fever, she leaves her bed to press some plea on his behalf. "In a thousand years I shall not exert myself again as I have just done for you!"

Every page of this correspondence is filled with the caressing expressions in which a sister's tenderness pours out. "All that interests you is dear to me, and I shall always hold my happiness incomplete while we are condemned to live so far apart. . . . I loved you to distraction when you were a child. The feeling is unchanged, and will never alter while I live. . . . All that I do for you is the

one thing for which there may be no gratitude, to love you with all my heart." One of her first letters after their parting gently scolds him, boy as he still is, for a too formal address towards herself. "You are, I know, a pretty big boy, *a man of consequence*, but remember that I knew you when that high. Then I was your good friend in name; to-day I am this in fact. And so, I beg of you, do not fear the words which express friendship. I will tolerate no *Mademoiselle* in a letter from you. In public one bows to custom, but between you and me I will lose nothing."

Young Vichy's backwardness seems excusable enough, for it appears certain that he was long ignorant of the truth about his friend's origin, witness a letter with veiled allusions to the family's earlier refusal of Madame d'Albon's great desire that her daughter should be recognised. "Perhaps all this is still a sealed book to you, dear friend. Your mother will give you a key to unlock it." The young man naturally questioned Countess de Vichy, and the unhappy impression of the dismal truth upon his candid nature is clearly apparent in this laconic entry in the day's diary. "I had a long talk with mother about Mademoiselle de Lespinasse. What horrors!" Abel's affection for his sister increases from this date, becomes, if possible, more tender. He journeys to Paris especially to see her, and to show her his wife and children; takes a more active part against her traducers; when the time comes, makes himself a place at her bedside, and refuses to leave before the end. "My nephew,"

writes Madame du Deffand next day, "wished to see the will. *He claimed a right to this*, and it seems that he had one, for he certainly got his way."

This lengthy discussion may close with a plea for indulgence, if only since it anticipates several points which must be reopened in the course of my narrative. But it is to be remembered that the problem of Julie's parentage has been regarded as one of the insoluble enigmas of literary history. Material proof is still lacking, as is usual in such cases, but the moral proofs just brought together seem convincing, and the following narrative will assume that they are so.

The silence of contemporary records anent the parentage of Mademoiselle de Lespinasse is broken in regard to her childhood, but the major part of the details to be thus gleaned are unfortunately apocryphal. The most complete story is La Harpe's. It is likewise the least trustworthy—a regrettable fact, since his narration is quite a drama in brief, and lacks no element of possible interest. The injured husband of his tale kidnaps the child and hides her in a provincial convent; there the distracted mother mysteriously appears, while jealous legitimate children terrify their unfortunate sister with brutal threats. "Her mother redoubled her fears by the most solemn warnings against all who might endeavour to visit her at the convent. She must partake of nothing which did not emanate from the kitchen of the house, decline all sweets and flowers, leave the grounds under no pretext whatever." Grimm is less circumstantial, but

almost as ill-informed. "She was the daughter of Countess d'Albon, who never dared to own her. Since she has learned the full meaning of this denial, she declines to receive anything from her mother." The errors in all these recitals are little less numerous than the words in which they are couched. The truth is both far from simple, and far less tragic.

So far from disowning her daughter, the countess at once took Julie into her own house, rearing her "almost publicly," and in defiance of gossip. This is the formal statement of a man who had the story direct from Mademoiselle de Lespinasse's mouth, and Guibert's assertion runs, point by point, with that of Madame du Deffand and the story as I have pieced it out from papers in the Château d'Avauges. The illegitimate child shares the nurture and education of her mother's lawful issue in these days, or, if there be a distinction drawn, it is all in favour of the "love-child." Madame d'Albon's usual residence at the time was the old manor-house at Avauges, on the road between Lyons and Tarare, a residence continuously occupied by successive heads of the family since the destruction of their castle at Saint-Forgeux in the sixteenth century. Avauges at this time retained its ramparts, moats, and towers, all the concomitants of a medieval feudal fortress, but it was rebuilt in 1765 in the style of Louis XV., thus losing in grandeur but falling more into line with newer ideas and customs. The old stronghold has now perished, but no vandal hands have been able to mar the

charms of its former site in the fertile valley watered by the Turdine, or the splendid panorama of a horizon on which the long line of wooded hill-tops of the Forez range is crowned by the three mountains Tarare, Saint Loup, and Saint Romain.

Julie de Lespinasse passed her earliest years in this lordly house. Of the Countess d'Albon's legitimate children, the daughter Diane was her senior by sixteen years, a disparity in age precluding any comradeship or affinity in tastes. But Camille, born in 1724, was still a child, and so much her companion that Madame du Deffand can write, "she spent her youth with him." Sincere and mutual affection was the fruit of these early days, the first influences so potent in their impression upon all after life. It survived their later separation, and was broken only by a cruel misunderstanding many years later. This quiet and uneventful life was disturbed in its eighth year by two events, the marriage of Diane with Gaspard de Vichy, and Camille's entry into the army. The lad's departure doubtless lost Julie a joyous comrade, and condemned her to the monotonous existence of an only child; but the marriage of her elder sister, celebrated at Avauges on November 18, 1739, led to results of a darker kind, for the long roll of her misfortunes may be said to begin from this date.

The idea, and final arrangement, of such a marriage could only cost Madame d'Albon the deepest remorse and many tears. No record, indeed, remains to tell us of the long mental struggle, the

heart-rending agonies endured by the poor woman, but her deep and bitter suffering is sufficiently to be understood from the immediate change in her habits of life. Tenderness turns to exaltation, dreaminess to mysticism; a natural melancholy becomes the darkest depression. Alone with the child whose very existence is the endless reminder of her sin, she seems haunted by prevision of the storms awaiting this frail life, and eternally reproaches herself with the pains and disillusionment in store for a daughter only too like herself. Already ailing as she was, the presentiment of early death unduly darkened her prevision of the lot of the orphan left alone, or dependent upon a father with little real affection for her and so placed that he must look askance upon a daughter who could be nothing but a vexatious encumbrance at best, and the cause of complications from which she herself would be the first to suffer.

A dream, now taking shape in the Countess d'Albon's mind, was the natural outcome of such ponderings. Whatever the facts, and despite the then separation between the count and herself, Julie had been born within the term of that marriage, and christened first with her mother's first name, and next with that of a family estate. She had been bred up at Avauges under her own constant care. All this amounted to a public confession of motherhood, which might surely condone the irregular conditions of the child's actual entry upon this life, and the imposture committed at the baptism. All her desires centred on the possibility

of legalising the bastard, of giving to Julie place and name, with the rights inseparable from it, a lawful daughter's share in the family inheritance. Dubiously feasible as the project may seem to us, we can read the seriousness of the discussion in the fears of those whose interests would have suffered by such an act of reparation, the way in which they afterwards exercised themselves to obtain Julie's promise never to pursue the idea, and finally, despite this promise and almost up to the day of her death, their careful precautions against the eventuality of any such attempt. Certainly, no act of Mademoiselle de Lespinasse ever justified these fears, but, also, she never denied her origin. Her correspondence teems with the plainest allusions to this, and many of her letters, to members of the family and friends alike, are sealed with the d'Albon arms engraved on the lozenge-shaped shield used by unmarried daughters.

Whatever the prospect of success, Madame d'Albon clung tenaciously to the hope of restoring to her daughter all the advantages of a legitimate status. It is only too easy to understand how the chief obstacle to this was her own son-in-law, or how, whatever might have been their position without his influence, Diane and Camille neglected no means of thwarting such maternal hopes. Singularly painful scenes were the natural result, and it is these miserable squabbles to which Mademoiselle de Lespinasse alludes in her bitter letter to Abel de Vichy. "You at all events know the tenderness of my affection for your mother. She has over-

whelmed me with proofs of her goodness and affection, and although she has denied herself the establishment of my life's happiness, thanks to a scruple more than praiseworthy in itself, no doubt, yet one which might have found its counterpoise in the wonderful consequences to myself, I shall never regret my immense loss on this account if she comes to understand that my feeling for her is to the same extent more lively and more real than that of those others for whose sake she has herself made immense sacrifices."

Unable to secure her daughter's future in any regular way, Madame d'Albon would gladly have seen her safe within the walls of a convent, then even more than to-day the natural refuge of life's poor children. The terms of her will leave no room for doubt upon this point. But here again the countess found her path insurmountably barred. Young as the child was, her spirit and aspirations revolted absolutely before the silent peacefulness, the anticipated death, of the nunnery. Her ardent heart and passionate disposition were already displaying that activity of mind, the curious intelligence and fierce lust of living, of which neither age, sickness, nor a very sea of troubles could ever quite extinguish the fires. "If I have often fallen to saying that life is the grand evil, I have sometimes felt it a supreme good, and the wish that they had never been born, so often found in the mouth of the unhappy, shall certainly never pass my lips. Indeed and indeed, let my present mood call for the release of death, I render thanks

to that order of creation under which I came to be born."

Foiled in her hopes this second time, Madame d'Albon's redoubled fears contemplated the future of the innocent creature, whom she must so soon leave to face life alone. Unable to contain these terrors, she could not refrain from imparting them to her in whom they had their origin, and the child received the half-veiled confidences of her sorrow and remorse. "Often," says Guibert, "she would secretly bathe her daughter's face with her tears. The unhappy mother seemed to hope that, as she overwhelmed her with caresses and favours, all this tenderness might in some way compensate her daughter for the sad benefit of her birth." A letter of Julie herself to Condorcet contains a startling confirmation of this. "By a surely singular contrariety, my childhood was troubled by the very care taken to exercise and exalt my sensibilities. Terror and fear were my familiars long before I could either think or judge."

In the month of August 1746 Madame d'Albon, feeling that the end could not be delayed much longer, summoned her notary to Avauges. A clause in her will thus refers to Julie: "I bequeathe to Julie Jeanne Eléonore Lespinasse, daughter of Claude Lespinasse and Julie Navarre, an annual allowance of three hundred livres[1] for the term of her life, and I direct that the said sum be payable to her as to one half-part at each half-year, the first

[1] The *livre* varied in value between 20 and 25 sous in the various provinces. The franc was coined to supersede it.

payment to be made at my decease, and payment thenceforward to be made in advance; the said allowance shall be for the maintenance, education, and nurture of the said Lespinasse, in such convent as she may at her election choose to enter until such time as she marry, attain her majority, or assume the veil, in each or either of which events I direct that my heir shall disburse the sum of six thousand livres as dowry for the said Lespinasse, on entering religion, marriage, or attaining her majority, and the sum aforesaid I hereby acknowledge to have been by me received in trust for the said Lespinasse, the payment of which sum notwithstanding she shall continue to enjoy the said annuity of three hundred livres during the term of her natural life, or an annuity of two hundred livres if she enter a house of religion. . . . This being my intent, I hereby declare my heir free and discharged of the said payment of the sum of six thousand livres in case the said Lespinasse shall have married or entered a house of religion during the period of my life, notwithstanding always that in this event I shall myself have paid the said sum of six thousand livres, in the which event my heir shall remain bound for the due discharge of the annuity only as aforesaid."[1]

The dowry and annuity thus left to her daughter by the Countess d'Albon may appear by no means unduly large or in proportion to her income, for, heavily as her inheritance had suffered, she was still far from poor. The discrepancy is, however,

[1] Countess d'Albon died on April 6 in the following year, 1748.

easily accounted for, if we remember that this will is made in due form, fully witnessed. In such a document, Madame d'Albon must perforce treat her daughter like any stranger, but, having thus observed the conventions, she sought to make redress by means of a simple gift. Madame du Deffand records that "a cabinet in her room contained a sufficiently large sum of money" set aside for this purpose, and that, shortly before the end, she caused Julie to be summoned to her bedside, gave her the key of the cabinet, and "bade her keep the contents for her personal use." Unfortunately, no sooner was her mother dead, than the girl's first care was to restore the whole to her brother. "She led Monsieur d'Albon to the said bureau, gave him the key, and insisted on his taking the entire contents," refusing to receive for herself a single penny out of moneys upon which she could have no sort of lawful claim. The generosity of so disinterested an action is only to be compared with its imprudence, for, having stripped herself of the ability to stand alone, Julie remained at the mercy of those who might wish to control her future.

Julie de Lespinasse was sixteen when she lost the mother whom she loved with much tenderness, and of whose memory she was to write, "it has always been to me both dear and the subject of reverence." Her intense grief touched the least sympathetic, and the pain of it was much increased by her fears of the loneliness to follow. Camille d'Albon, "who had always treated her as his real

sister," and evinced real affection for her, being recalled to his duties as an officer in the cavalry, found it impossible to assume charge of so young a girl in a garrison town. She was thus thrown upon the compassion of the Count and Countess de Vichy, and the Marquise du Deffand asserts that their "spontaneous" offer of a home was "very gladly accepted." Whatever the truth of this gladness, it is certain that the removal to the Vichys' estate at Champrond, and the severance of all those precious memories which bound her to the old manor of Avauges, entailed a change of life little less radical than if one should root some tender plant from its special plot and cast it to wither on ground quite unsuited to its need, under inclement and sunless skies.

Champrond, created a county by letters under date 1644, lay on the border between the Mâconnais and Lyonnais, in the small district of Ligny-en-Brionnais. Beyond a few ruined walls, nothing now remains of the old château, sold by the Revolutionary government as the property of the *Emigrés;* but a detailed description, dated 1735, affords a sufficiently accurate idea of the house in which Mademoiselle de Lespinasse passed four years of her life.

A "stronghold" rather than a pleasure-house, Champrond consisted of "a great square tower, flanked by long wings to left and right, the whole surrounded by a moat crossed by a drawbridge." The severe aspect of this pile was relieved by two grand terraces, "one to the north-east, the other to the south"; a formal garden, a pigeon-house, a

stream which wound through the park, "long alleys of wych-elm," and an old chapel at the end of one of these. Moderate as the wealth of its owners appears to have been, their household included all the numerous functionaries then deemed inseparable from the estate of a gentleman—almoner, steward, major-domo, two cooks, four lackeys, a coachman, and two postillions, besides "two secretaries and an assistant-governess." Some idea of the luxurious furnishing of the house may be obtained from the record of the sale decreed in 1793. It lasted an entire month, and produced a sum of forty-eight thousand livres—high figures for that age.

Until Julie's arrival, Count and Countess de Vichy and their children were the sole regular inmates of the château. Gaspard, still robust despite his full fifty-three years, and a retired major-general, ruled his family estates with the imperious strictness and harshly minute scrutiny characteristic of all his actions, and relaxed only on the rare occasions when policy sent him to Paris, since his sister, Madame du Deffand, lived there and he aspired to her inheritance.

The countess, an intelligent and clever woman, but entirely subservient to a husband much older than herself and of whom she stood in fear, was entirely absorbed in the care of her children. At the time of Julie's arrival she was expecting her third child. This daughter, born only six weeks after Madame d'Albon's death, was christened Anne Camille, but the child appears to have died in infancy. Of her two elder children, Abel

Claude Marie was just turning his ninth year, whilst his brother, Alexandre Mariette, was three years younger. Of this latter, little record need be made. Hot-tempered, weak-willed, the subject of fits of rage which raised serious doubts as to his sanity, he disliked companionship from his earliest years, and lived in surly, usually solitary, aloofness. Before the boy could be fairly called a youth, he was in the habit of leaving home and completely disappearing for months at a time. His death, at the age of twenty-five, came to the family as a relief rather than a cause for sorrow.

Abel's character was of a very different kind, and seldom have two brothers developed greater or more startling dissimilarities after an identical up-bringing, the one crazy, restless, and morose, the other almost as signally sweet, tractable, and sane. Age and education merely increased this lad's natural excellences. In such of his letters as have come down to us, and a diary, we see an upright and loyal lad, deliberate in action, chaste and sensible, of moderate wits, lacking in brilliance, but overcoming this deficiency by strength of will and a simple common sense; a boy, indeed, worthy at all points of the witness borne by Julie when she writes, "I loved you with all my heart when you were still of the tenderest years, but to this sentiment has been added the esteem always evoked when an upright spirit is found wedded to a strong will." I need not repeat what I have already said of the immediate affection conceived by the girl for this child, eight years her junior,

and to whom she was so nearly related by ties not to be confessed. Abel was her comfort in sad hours through all the four years spent with the Vichys, the one real joy which sometimes scattered the clouds of her habitual melancholy.

Guibert, usually well-informed, says that it was in Champrond that Mademoiselle de Lespinasse first learned the full truth about her birth. "They [*i.e.* her relations] made her understand who she was. . . . In a single minute she found herself reduced to the position of an orphan and a stranger. A disdainful and barbarous charity thus took in charge the unfortunate girl, hitherto surrounded by every care known to natural affection and remorse." Whatever the effects of this sudden revelation, Julie's earlier days in the château appear to have been moderately calm and peaceful. Reading and work filled the day. Here she finished her education, interrupted at Avauges, now studying on her own account, now busying herself with the children's lessons. Doubtless her taste was finally formed, and her wit sharpened at a later date—we shall see in what an incomparable school—but the brilliant polish acquired in after years rested on the sure foundations to be laid by early study alone. "She was no wise woman," writes a contemporary, "but she was excellently informed. She knew English and Italian, and was acquainted with the literature of several other tongues through the medium of our best translations. No one known to me has so fully possessed the precious gift of seizing the right word. She grew up on

Racine, Voltaire, and la Fontaine; she knew them by heart."

The year following Julie's arrival at Champrond, Monsieur and Madame Vichy passed the winter in Paris, leaving their children in her sole charge. Young as she was, single-handed, and with none to counsel her, the girl undertook the care of three children, the eldest among them scarcely turned ten, and the youngest still in the cradle, and devoted herself to this precocious mothering without a murmur. Her marked taste for children can, indeed, be noticed at every stage in her life. She seems to understand their nature and admire their graceful ways. "If you cared for them a trifle more," she writes to Guibert at a later date, "I would confide in you my idea that I observe some affinity with them in everything that attracts. A child has so much grace, such adaptability, and is so natural. After all, what is Harlequin but half a cat and half a child, and was there ever his superior in charm?" Julie's conduct of her little kingdom on this occasion won her the adoration of its subjects. Even their parents, so frigid as a rule, allowed a trifle of gratitude to pass their lips. Three years later Madame du Deffand writes of this: "They were loud in their praises, telling me how much they owed her for her infinite trouble in educating their daughter."

The return of the count and his wife none the less marks the commencement of a less peaceful period. On the exact point at issue the vaguest

and most incomplete particulars are available, but it was not long before the existing order of things became clearly intolerable, and life at Champrond a little hell on earth. Expressions used by Guibert and Madame du Deffand seem to suggest that, struck by the unexpected aptitudes evinced by their ward, Count and Countess Guibert sought to exploit this for their own advantage, more or less consciously pressing Julie into the position of a governess, without salary and, equally, without any particular claims to consideration or the courtesies. An appeal to her heart might have induced her to play such a part, but this attempt to impose it called up instant revolt. She was certainly no woman to accept the treatment of an inferior from her equals, even if she had not shared the knowledge that their blood ran in her own veins. Certain passages in her letters point to the further probability that tension existed in respect of the incurable fears, now as always at work in the family, lest any consideration shown her—her very freedom of the family roof—might be used to support an attempt to recover her mother's name and a share in her fortune. There arose in this way an affectation of reserves, galling supervision, incessant reminders, less in word than in the very terms of existence, of the bastard's smirch under which her young pride suffered so cruelly. With a nature as fine and impressionable, as quick to distinguish shades and suggestions; a soul ever alert, and of the quality to which judgment and feeling are synonymous terms, it is easy to understand what

dumb irritation and, presently, fierce resentment filled the heart of this girl of twenty. Numerous violent scenes occurred, and words were exchanged of the kind never forgotten, for which no reparation can be made. Always intense in her feelings, she can now see her relations in no light but that of "barbarian persecutors," and is visited with those moods of acute despair to which death appears as a haven of refuge. "She survived," writes Guibert, after receiving her confidences on these evil days, "because grief does not kill at that age; more correctly, because that age is not yet acquainted with grief."

Two years of this lamentable existence saw her endurance at an end, and her mind made up. She will no longer eat the bitter bread of a heartless pity, but will abandon an asylum which yields nothing but humiliations and slights. The aspirations of a soul, ever fluttering its wings toward the mirage-light of life's unknown allurements, shall be crushed down, and her mother's last wish fulfilled by her entry into a convent. Her eldest brother, Camille d'Albon, "on whose friendship she pinned her faith, and who had always treated her as his real sister," should advise her, help her even with his purse to complete, if needful, a sufficient sum to dower her as a nun. No sooner was the project formed, than Julie pursued it hot-foot. She wrote to Count d'Albon to inform him of her "unassailable resolution," and appealed to his brotherly devotion.

At this juncture, and in the midst of these

preparations, a chance new-comer, arriving at Champrond, swept away the entire fabric of her plans. Her disordered ship is thenceforth steered directly back to the deep from which it had so lately turned. Julie sails at last for the large horizon of seas sown with reefs and peopled with tempests, and the pilot, author of this revolution, need scarcely be named as the Marquise du Deffand.

CHAPTER II

The Marquise du Deffand—Three periods in her life—State of her mind on arrival at Champrond—Rapid intimacy with Mademoiselle de Lespinasse—Spiritual and physical portrait of Julie in her twentieth year—First project of living with Madame du Deffand—Julie leaves the Vichys—Period of her stay at Lyons—Complicated negotiations with Madame du Deffand—Opposition of Count d'Albon—Julie decides to live in Paris.

FEW women of the eighteenth century are either more celebrated, or better deserve their fame, than she whose appearance at Champrond so changed the life of Mademoiselle de Lespinasse. This Madame du Deffand of history is the old friend of Walpole and the Duchesse de Choiseul, the coiner of sparkling epigrams, and the correspondent many of whose letters may well bear comparison with those of Madame de Sévigné. But the story of her youth, the school wherein her mind was formed, her family history, or the more intimate details of her career, are shrouded in a certain obscurity which it seems that she was at no pains to dissipate. Our interest, however, lies with just this aspect of her personality, and before developing the large question of her place in Julie's life, I may sketch the portrait revealed by the careful researches of my predecessors and my own inquiries.

Gaspard de Vichy's younger sister Marie was born at Champrond on the 25th of December 1697.

Early committed to the care of the Benedictines of La Madeleine du Traisnel at Paris, she passed her entire youth in the scarcely edifying atmosphere of a convent in little but the name, and under an abbess, Francoise d'Arbouze de Villemont, who was credited with according her favours to a list of adorers ranging from the Marquis d'Argenson to the flute-player Descoteaux. The pupil's subsequent confession that she learned nothing in so dubious and flighty an atmosphere, but pieced out her own education after leaving the place, is hardly surprising. Nor need we wonder unduly if her lost faith declined to rise anew under the eloquence of Massillon, sent by an aunt, the Duchesse de Luynes, to combat the recusancy of this horribly precocious child of ten. "My astonished spirit trembled before his," she recalls in after years, "but I surrendered to the importance of the reasoner, not the power of his arguments." Champfort's record of the astounding interview asserts that, having carefully heard her objections, Massillon retired with a "She's a charming child." Asked, however, to suggest the most likely book to convince his disputant, his sole reply was "A penny catechism!"

In her twenty-first year Julie de Vichy married the Marquis du Deffand, a man of good birth but a poor husband, in character mediocre and meddlesome, "at a thousand little pains to displease," as she concisely remarks. A single step from the cloister launched the young wife on the court of the Regent. The consequences of her daily intimacy

with his favourites and mistresses need not be dwelt upon. We may well follow the prudent reserve of their heroine and cast a veil over passing aberrations, which left her full of self-disgust and profoundly contemptuous of those who had shared them. Satiated by ten years of such follies, and determined to reform, she doubly fortified her purpose by obtaining a formal separation from her husband and engaging in a serious intrigue. The method hardly commends itself to modern taste, but in adopting it Madame du Deffand merely kept touch with an age in which it was the accustomed refuge of women in search of the quiet life and a fireside of almost conjugal tranquillity. Her choice was that of a woman both wise and intelligent, and she could certainly point to the happiest results.

At this time, the year 1730, President Henault was in his forty-fifth year. Of striking presence, bright-eyed, and of a florid complexion, with fine and well-kept hands, he was a typical worldly and lettered magistrate of an age now passed—fluent as a speaker, as a writer nourished on the sound old classical stuff, ready to pass, as at a game, from grave historical arguments to the lightest scenario of a ballet at the Opera, from gallant rondeaux to the pompous measure of a tragedy. Serious, yet no pedant; loving his joke, but never descending to silliness; free of tongue, yet without offence; enjoying life, but no libertine; a delicate walker in all his pleasures; an upright gentleman, with a pretty taste in wines and at

the table, the President was in one word and in every respect "entirely amiable," according to his generation's acceptance of the phrase. In all the varied spheres through which he moved, at court or in the *salons*, in Parliament or the Academy, the wings at the Opera or the boudoir of a pretty lady, he was ever the man, entirely at his ease and in the right place, of whom the excellent Duc de Luynes is moved to speak with thus boundless admiration. "He is the most knowing man-of-the-world in every respect—in respect, at all events, of whatever is socially useful and agreeable." Even caustic d'Argenson does no more than flavour his honey with gall. "He has wit, grace, delicacy, and tact; successfully cultivates music, poetry, and light literature, and is never either first-class or superior, stupid or flat."

But if men could praise thus, women almost pursued him. They "doted" on him, and he seldom proved cruel. He was, indeed, a discreet man, of a sweet and indulgent temper, capable of friendship, and perhaps of tenderness, of passion never;—as one may perceive, the ideal lover for a woman of thirty, something notorious for the faults of her youth, and seeking, above all else, an amiable and trusty companion, a man to stand for her against the slanderer, a guide and strong arm for the ever difficult way which leads from youth to maturity. Hénault was all this to Madame du Deffand. Calculation and expediency pushed her to the connection. It rapidly restored her lost consideration, and became the solid foundation

on which was built the edifice of her new career. He rendered yeoman service in this kind, but her gentler wares repaid him fully. *Blasée* and weary she might be, but her weariness was shot with the piquant and ever fresh play of her wit. She became the solace of his leisure, the incomparable attraction at his famous suppers. Whatever the occasional tyrannies of his mistress, the demand of her changing humours, Hénault is presently dependent on the atmosphere with which she has infused existence. "You are my necessary evil," he writes when the relation is already ten years old.

Nevertheless, neither on the one side nor the other did this connection ever evoke absolute confidence, tender self-surrender, or even real affection. Still less could it bring those storms of the senses or the imagination which sometimes wear the mantle of love. "Neither temperament nor romance," Madame du Deffand writes of herself; while the President, worn before his time by late hours and high living, was not far from the period of life when, in his own phrase, "a man is not wholly sorry if he happen to mistake the hour and to miss an assignation." Thus it was not long before the lovers became a pair of allies, more really a couple of old friends united by custom and the power of habit, not even taking the trouble to prolong a mutually meaningless comedy. "Your absence is delightful," she writes. He answers in the same vein, "I regretted you the more since absence might credit you with sentiments that

only your presence disproves"—strange passages between strange lovers!

This period of her life saw Madame du Deffand lay the foundations of her future *salon.* Every summer she spent several months at Sceaux. At its celebrated "court," among the friends of the Duchesse du Maine, those whom Paris then accounted its men of letters and women of wit, the Marquise finished her education, and formed her literary taste at the feet of authors, learned men, and the philosophers of the day. Her quick intelligence seldom failed to assimilate whatever she read or heard. Later in the year, when she took up her winter quarters—first with her brother, the canon of La Sainte Chapelle, later in her own house in the Rue de Beaune, the new friends gathered round her table. These parties were originally of no great size, but her reputation for wit grew fast, as her epigrams were freely repeated. A little feared, and much courted in consequence, the company of her visitors swelled until "the gradual increase of her reputation caused her to find her quarters inadequate." The opportune death of her husband about this time largely increased her means, and made possible that removal from the Rue de Beaune to the Convent of Saint Joseph which was to renew the fame of a house already notable as the residence of Madame de Montespan. I must shortly return to the subject of this house, for it was the home of Julie de Lespinasse during ten years, and the cradle of her fame.

The Marquise du Deffand was close upon her fiftieth year at the date of this move, April 1747. She had recovered her place in public opinion, and had forsaken gallantry for love, finding no great profit in either. The time seemed ripe for yet a third essay, in which she should confine herself to the pleasures of friendship. The resolve was no sooner taken than she put it in practice with her customary decision and rapidity. A complete change in her mode of life announced it to the world. "I have entirely reformed myself," she tells Formont. "I have forsaken the public shows, and attend High Mass in my parish church. The rouge-pot and my President must forego the honour of formal renunciation." Hénault, as suggested in these words, remained a frequent visitor at the new house, but any privilege other than that of his fellow-guests is lost to him. The hour of adventures has struck. All friends are equally welcome, and husbandless and childless, without an obligation, the Marquise du Deffand knows no care other than to lay up for herself a pleasant and easy old age in the bosom of many friendships. Henceforth her personality assumed the guise under which it has come down to posterity.

The scheme was cunningly devised, yet it almost suffered shipwreck on the rocks of unforeseen disaster. The Marquise had but newly "reformed" when she received the first hint of impending misfortune in a threatened failure of sight, surely one of the greatest ills to which

our humanity is prone. The progress of the malady filled her with fears and trembling, and she fought a desperate battle with this unseizable spectre of sightless old age, a horror which seemed daily nearer and more menacing. When the Profession confessed themselves powerless, she called in the quacks and charlatans—a numerous class at the time. Each boasted his remedy and promised a cure, and each failed in turn. But if no miracle came, the Marquise at least prolonged the period of her hopes, no mean benefit; "and when she had vainly tried all their remedies, it was easy to be reconciled to what could not be amended and had become a normal condition."

This statement of Madame de Genlis is, doubtless, too highly coloured. If Madame du Deffand became finally reconciled, her surrender was never absolute, certainly not thus rapid. Her letters of the period may ignore the haunting fear, but they are full of tremors and but slightly veiled anguish. Four years of fruitless struggles found her, in 1752, highly discouraged and without many illusions on the score of her fate. The painful subject has now to be recognised. Word and letter take her friends into confidence, and she receives their comfort, little as we can conceive that it justified the name. "You say that you are blind. Do you not see that we, you and I, were little rebel spirits, and are now consigned to the shades. You should find comfort in the thought that those who see are not, by that one token, luminous!" The honour of such poor

stuff falls to Montesquieu. Voltaire follows, but if he provides a trifle of sympathy, his compassion is still of little more account. "My eyes were a little moist when they read of what has befallen yours. Monsieur de Formont's letter had made me believe you between the devil and the deep sea, not in darkness. But I pity you infinitely if you have really lost the use of them." To Formont, however, he writes in pretty, jocular strain of the death that had fallen upon those eyes which once claimed so many victims. "Why must we sinners suffer through the organs wherewith we were used to sin? And what is this rage of nature to spoil her finest works? At least, Madame du Deffand keeps her spirit. Her eyes were never finer!"

One can hardly wonder if this Job's sympathy from her friends-in-name drove a tortured soul to seek for other refuge, or to pursue a less selfish devotion. Deeper motives need hardly be sought to explain the resolution, however sudden, which led her to abandon Paris, home, and friends, and at least for a time, with her own kindred and in the midst of fields and deep woods, to ensue some rest for a disquieted spirit, balm for her bruised soul. Possibly there was the additional hope that the airs of home might renew her health and the vital powers, and so exercise a happy influence on the sight. Late in August, at all events, the master of Champrond was called upon to mask whatever surprise accompanied his vision of a travelling carriage from which came forth the sister who, these almost forty years, seemed to

have laid aside all memory of a road leading to the ancient home of their race.

The attitude of the Marquise to her family clearly displays her changeable humour and contradictory nature. Her letters to friends seldom mention a relation otherwise than in a spirit of indifference little removed from hostility. "I have a nephew in Paris, the son of my eldest brother, Monsieur de Vichy. He lives with my brother the treasurer, and I seldom set eyes on one or the other." And again, "My Vichy nephews are with me. They are just now in the next room, and I'm singularly anxious to be rid of them." We shall shortly notice a letter to the Duchesse de Luynes, full of a like contemptuous tone, this time for the writer's brother and his wife. Letters from the Vichy side breathe reciprocal sentiments. My sisters d'Aulan and du Deffand are "a couple of Megaeras" is Gaspard's crude remark. Other letters have, none the less, recently come to light, tender phrases in which, such as are seldom heard from Madame du Deffand, but which wear every appearance of sincerity, must lead us to suppose that she cherished a larger attachment for her family than it was her cue to confess before her Parisian friends. "Be sure to tell them," she writes to the Vichys' secretary, Abbe Denis, "that I wish to devote my last days to them. I would fain meet the end thus, for I should certainly be far happier in their midst than among people for not one of whom do I really care, and in whose company I find no interest." To the Marquis de Vichy himself she writes, under

a later date: "If only my age allowed of such things, I should not hesitate for a moment about coming to find you. I can assure you that my feelings in your regard are rather those of a loving mother than of the simple aunt that I am." Mademoiselle de Lespinasse confirms the reality of these sentiments. "She is tenderly interested in anything that concerns you. . . . She speaks her mind sincerely and freely, because she considers you just the people to profit by such candour. You must not, therefore, be either remorseful or disturbed, for you are more than pardoned—you are her beloved ones."

It seems tolerably clear that Madame du Deffand arrived at Champrond with the best intentions towards its inmates, and that she began by sparing no efforts to maintain a good understanding. "The whole province," she tells Madame de Luynes shortly after her departure from the Château, "will bear witness to my intentions in their regard. I praised everything, adapted myself to their habits; far from causing trouble in the house, my servants did far more for them than did their own. Finally, Madame," she concludes, not without a touch of malice, "what can better prove to you how welcome they made me, and how they counted on my friendship, than the readiness and pleasure with which they accepted the little presents that I was moved to make them?" Such excellent conduct was perhaps partly dictated by diplomatic considerations. Nothing but spontaneous attraction drew the visitor's attention, from

the moment of her arrival, to the poor and lonely girl, living as little more than a stranger under a roof which she must almost have counted her own, and all whose pride could not hide her sufferings. "I soon saw," writes the Marquise, "that she did not love her life too well, and often had tears behind her lashes." The restraint with which Julie suffered was doubtless the first cause of Madame du Deffand's attention, later of her sympathy. Frequent talks soon led to confidences, and it was not long before the elder woman's keen eye came to recognise one of the finest natures which it had yet been her fortune to discover.

Julie's personal appearance had little to do with her singular powers of attraction. Her best friends are quite frank on this point. Thus d'Alembert writes to her, "I never mention your face, for you set no store by it yourself." Guibert is even more direct in his *L'Eloge d'Eliza*. "Her last claim was to beauty, yet this plainness did not repel at even the first glance. It seemed perfectly natural at a second, and vanished when she opened her lips." Guibert, of course, did not know her until her thirty-eighth year. She was then sadly disfigured by small-pox. Madame du Deffand, on the contrary, first met her when barely twenty, and if her features were irregular, the girl's appearance was then sufficiently pleasant. The little head, well set on a fine neck, was crowned with an abundance of brown hair. The face was oval, and the nose fine, though a trifle turned-up; the mouth a little full, but frank. Her black eyes were

strangely expressive, with an air of deep thoughtfulness—"her mother's look, with a touch of added liveliness."

Tall and slender, yet of a good figure, her distinction of carriage was in some contrast to the simplicity of her dress. All her motions were graceful. She walked with an air. But the point upon which all contemporaries insist is the extraordinary interest of her features—sensitive, never at rest, reflecting as in a clear glass every movement of her spirit, all the sensations of her mind. "I have seen," exclaims Guibert, "faces moved by passion, pleasure, high spirits, or sorrow; but of what a thousand shades was I ignorant until we met." Gay or serious, ironical or passionate; now exquisitely yielding, a moment later the fragile surface scarcely veiling the latent deeps of power and energy; ever full of life and sympathy,—she claimed the attention of the most indifferent, and unconsciously became the focus of any party, the single preoccupation of all who found themselves in her company. Guibert may be quoted again: "I have seen her electrify apathy, and raise a moderate mind to her own level. . . . 'You give life to marble,' I have told her, 'and matter thinks in your hands.'"

Doubtless, this power over other minds was the fruit of her own intense life. At the age when womanhood has not yet absorbed the child, to which life is still unreal and love unknown, an almost flame-like purity surrounds a girl, and instils "inexpressible interest" into her lightest word.

The moment is all her care; she is interested in nothing by halves. The modulations of her voice half betray the secrets of a soul which, as Julie herself bears witness, are too intense and too delicate for her to dare entrust them to the treacherous interpretation of speech. "How utterly words fail to convey what one really feels! The brain finds sounds, but the soul cries out for a new language. Indeed, but I feel more than there are separate words to utter!" But nature is just in her compensations, and if one of the secrets of a girl's charm at this age is the gift which she can make of her soul, the way to her heart may be found in the same direction. Tenderness alone evokes real confidence. Sensitive as she is to a charming manner or seductive wit, she responds far more truly to a little self-surrender, trust, genuine affection. This is the real key; without it the finest qualities fail to reach her true self. It explains Julie's later criticism of Thomas.[1] "He is the most virtuous, the most sensible, even the most eloquent of men. His greatest fault is that he is incapable of stupidity. For myself, I am both always stupid and—Heaven be praised!—have no need to confess it!" The delicacy of sensation proper to this age enabled the girl to perceive the real worth of those who lavish protestations of friendship and offers of help. Her standard for judging men is their feeling rather than conduct. Once more, in Julie's own words, "I estimate intentions as others value actions."

[1] Author of *L'Eloge des Femmes*.

Sensibility of this kind, amounting often to a state of exaltation, was curiously allied with qualities of the most dissimilar aspect. After Marmontel's "the quickest brain, most passionate soul and inflammable imagination, allied since Sappho died," one is a little surprised to discover, in the same person, a fund of reasonableness and sound sense able to resist the impulses of this ardent heart in all but its most crucial motions. The grand originality of Mademoiselle de Lespinasse, the quality which makes her a unique character, is precisely this astonishing mixture of heat with self-containment, passion with the sense of proportion, blind haste and prevision; of a soul all impulse with a reflective mind.

Finally, precious as were these gifts, Mademoiselle de Lespinasse was also mistress of that without which the rest would have lost their charm. She was perfectly natural, eminently sincere. I do not here speak of that truth in word, that instinctive feeling for right which, she tells us, makes any reticence as impossible as a lie where one for whom she cares is concerned. This is that rarer sincerity born of true harmony between the soul and the visible conduct of a life. "Whether it were heart or brain which stirred her, gesture, features, the very tones of her voice moved in perfect accord with her words," is the testimony of one of her friends. She does herself equal justice in this letter—no one has ever described herself better or with more impartiality than Mademoiselle de Lespinasse—"You know a woman who

has never in her life been granted those charms of face, or the graces, which please, interest, or touch, and yet this person has succeeded better and won a thousand times more love than she could ever have aspired to. And, would you know the cause of this, it is just that she always went down to the truth of things, was herself true in all things." Or, again, "Tell me all the hard things you think of me, and I can assure you that some will still be left for me to say, for I know myself pretty well. . . . I seem to displease myself a good deal more than I displease others—a proof that I know myself better than others know me."

Such a medal has its reverse side, and these qualities have their defects. She can be as suddenly fascinated as she is prone to unreasoning dislikes. Extreme sensibility now depresses, now renders her susceptible, for her imagination riots in exaggeration. If she loves with all her heart, her friends find that much is required of them. Some complain that her affection is an exacting master. The passion with which she enters upon anything disturbs her judgment, and leads to frank injustice at times. There are moments when she can seem no longer mistress of herself, witness the confession, "My soul has a continual fever, with fiercer hours which often bring me to the threshold of delirium." These dangerous possibilities, from which she was after all the prime sufferer, showed themselves particularly in later years, when misfortune and sickness had come upon her. At this early stage in life they

were present, but had not come to power. Too early trouble had matured without embittering her character. "I knew sorrow at an early hour, and it has this of gain—that one escapes many follies in consequence. I was formed by the grand-master of our race, misfortune."

Somewhat as I have drawn her, Madame du Deffand doubtless found Julie de Lespinasse, while the couple walked and talked in this season of autumn under the leafy canopy of the drives in the park at Champrond. Contact with this young spirit, this warmly responsive and ardent soul, slowly thawed the ice of that habitual scepticism which chilled even the most real of the old Marquise's affections. Her interest in the sad lot of an orphan was fortified by her admiration for such a treasure of understanding. Thus she writes, after leaving Champrond: "You have lots of wits; you are alert and you can feel. These qualities will keep you charming just so long as you condescend to follow your nature and avoid pretentiousness and complexity." She adds a further exhortation. Julie is carefully to guard that quality wherein the Marquise finds the charm and very adornment of youth — her spontaneity, that ingenuous simplicity, that transparency of the soul, which bring it to pass that one may read the happenings within her as through a sheet of pure glass.

Doubtless there now came to her the vague feeling that by binding to her destiny this young being so brimful of vitality and affection, she

should find the one cure for the chronic weariness that devoured her, the depression against which she eternally and as vainly struggled, like so many other women of the time. This depression is none of that false brood, vulgar and to be combated by obvious means, the fruit of sloth and the want of occupation, voluntary or enforced, of the body or the soul, but the profound weariness that is born of an empty heart and sore despite, the "ashes on the tongue" which follow an inordinate pursuit of pleasure, the disillusionment of an existence bereft of its last ideal, without belief and without a real interest. A lesser disgust may find expression in yawns and complaints; this brings tears and despair, the conviction, wherewith Madame du Deffand was cursed, that life is capable of but one real trouble—"the fact of existence itself." Among all her intelligent friends, not the wisest was ever able to comprehend this state of mind. Voltaire himself, receiving the confidence of her woes, takes up his pen to ease them in this fashion: "Madame, I will make search for all that can, perhaps, amuse you, for to be amused is the end of our every aspiration. . . . To be constantly serious with oneself is out of all belief. If nature had not made us a trifle frivolous, we should be truly unhappy. The one reason why most of us have not long since hanged ourselves is that we are thus frivolous." Her friends all speak in the like strain, and one can imagine her ironical smile as she receives consolations

of which she writes: "For the health of this my soul, pretty infusions of lime-flowers; camomile and white syrup for the body—truly a very holy-water, and proof against the devil's best temptations." It is surely hard not to excuse her the chill disdain that thus judges the majority of these friends. "I live with certain amiable persons, possessed of humane and compassionate qualities. Thus is there born the semblance of friendship, and herewith I do content me."

President Hénault, years afterwards, writes to Julie, "In every respect you are yourself, and comparable with no one else." This dissimilarity from the type of her times assuredly counted for much in her attraction for Madame du Deffand. Had she indeed found the companion of her dreams, the woman who could enter into her misery, and bring new warmth to her heart? Would not this young person infuse into her life, so empty, useless, and lost to all desires, a hope of the coming years, a taste of that draught which woman drinks deep when children are born unto her? Thoughts of this kind indubitably seem to have moved in Madame du Deffand's brain, to have amounted to an idea of adoption. Circumstances were certainly propitious. We know that Julie was passing through a direful mental struggle. She confided her cares to the Marquise. "She told me that she could not possibly remain with Monsieur and Madame du Vichy, who had long treated her in the harshest and most humiliating fashion. Her patience was exhausted." More

than a year previously she had told Madame de Vichy of her wish to leave Champrond, and although she consented to postpone the breach for a few months out of deference to her hostess, it was now impossible for her to endure any more of the scenes to which she was daily forced to submit. Therefore, concluded the girl, it was her intention to seek refuge in a convent at Lyons, not as a nun, since no reflection could persuade her of a call to that, but as a simple boarder. Thus she would find her independence, and yet enjoy the considerable advantages to be derived from so pious an abode. Her mother had left her an annuity of a hundred crowns. If this were not enough, Camille d'Albon would remedy the deficiency. Julie had no doubt of his readiness so to do.

Madame du Deffand asserts that she at first opposed this project, to which her brother and sister-in-law evinced the liveliest objection. Gaspard, indeed, protested that it was "nothing to him," but that his wife took it greatly to heart, and he desired to spare her the pain of it. Both were certainly afraid of the talk that their neighbours would make over so brusque a rupture. The Marquise, persuaded to act as their ambassador to Julie, began by dwelling on the monotony of convent life, the annoyance that she must incur "by going to live in a town where certain things most disagreeable to herself were matters of common notoriety," the privations to be undergone if Count d'Albon refused to open his purse for her, and other

arguments of the same kind. All this eloquence was, however, rendered nugatory by the manner in which the orator concluded her discourse with a new suggestion. Why should Julie bury herself at Lyons when Paris contained the Convent of Saint Joseph, and the convent held ample room for two? Two lonely women might do worse than enter into an alliance when they found each other as sympathetic as in the present case. True, the temptress did no more than breathe the suggestion into Julie's ears on the eve of her departure, but the simple words shone as might a ray of sunlight in a starless night. "It seemed to me that it might be the happiest possible solution for her." The idea could not be carried out on the spot, but they would presently meet again at Lyons, and until then it was possible to correspond. "She begged me of my kindness to write to her, and to let her write to me. I was glad enough!" Above all, the pair entered into a solemn compact of silence.

Towards the close of October, Camille d'Albon, unable to come himself, despatched a trusty servant to act escort to his sister on her journey. The hour of leaving Champrond had struck. The parting provoked more emotions than need have been expected. Monsieur and Madame de Vichy appeared really moved. They conjured Julie "not to leave them altogether," at least to leave them with the hope that she would pass her summers under their roof. Julie was also deeply moved. Despite her injuries, she confessed genuine

affection for these so near relatives whose life she had shared for four years. Later letters from her pen leave no doubt of the reality and strength of a feeling that never left her. The children loudly bewailed their comrade and second mother; the servants could not restrain their tears. The noise of her heavy carriage, as it rolled from the gates, seemed to bear away the good cheer of the house and the central figure of its hearth.

Whatever the result of this departure upon the rest of those who remained behind, one sojourner at Champrond could not survive it. The peaceful life of the countryside lost all its charm for the Marquise du Deffand; a family existence became intolerable. D'Alembert's letter of December 4th shows this clearly. "Your last letter clearly demonstrates that Champrond has been no cure. Your soul seems sick unto death." A few days later he varies the phrase. "Paris bored you, and you thought to find yourself happier at Champrond. You went there, and you are depressed anew. . . ." Brief as was the interval between these letters, the latter found the Marquise already moved to Mâcon, as guest of the Bishop, de Lort de Sérignan de Valras, "a rarely good friend and as congenial as man can be, his tantrums notwithstanding, and they are a sad interruption to talk. He swears that it is I who am carried away, but what does it matter when one concludes by being as good friends as ever!" From Mâcon, as from Champrond, Madame du Deffand exchanged continual letters with Julie, and the famous idea was frequently in evidence.

The period of Julie's stay at Lyons is one of the obscurest phases in her story. No research has been able to reveal so much as the name of the convent in which she resided, but it seems a lawful surmise that, at first at all events, the quiet life pleased her, for when the Marquise came to visit her in the spring, and renewed her offer of a home in Paris, the girl hesitated long over a decision. This occurred early in April. Madame du Deffand spent ten days in Lyons, and Julie never left her side during that time. "She comes to me at eleven o'clock, and never stirs till she is compelled to return to the convent at six." Anxious as she was to win the girl's acceptance, the Marquise stated the whole case loyally. Julie must understand the misconstructions and annoyances almost certain to follow her appearance in Paris; "the impertinent gossip" of which she would be the subject, the many little petty annoyances inseparable from such a transplantation into a society which in tone, habits, and the personalities to be encountered, would be so utterly new. The Marquise dwelt upon these considerations, but she also detailed the various ways in which she hoped to soften their rigours for her friend. Finally, she did not spare her criticism of the girl's character. Julie required too much of others, lacked self-control, was incorrigibly suspicious, as witness her more than distaste for all whose conduct appeared to her artificial, even no more than adroit! Julie listened dutifully. The lecture evoked a species of disquiet in her, a presentiment which moved her soul to

question what had thus far been the supreme attraction of the scheme.

Cardinal de Tencin, quite recently invested with the Archbishopric of Lyons, and an old friend of Madame du Deffand, called on the latter during the course of this debate. Interested in this new dweller within his diocese, he inquired about her. The Marquise's replies increased his interest. He promised to exercise his influence on behalf of Julie, who tasted the first-fruits of such exalted protection in the matter of a private room now put at her disposal by the authorities at the convent. The Cardinal shortly called on Madame du Deffand a second time, and at once returned to the subject of this attractive young person. "He said that I (the Marquise) ought certainly to secure her companionship, for she would be both useful and necessary in the unfortunate circumstances that threatened me. Moreover, my relatives and Monsieur d'Albon ought to desire the same arrangement, since nothing could more certainly assure them of her safety. We discussed all the inconveniences of such an arrangement, and could find none which was not both easy to foresee and to avoid." Thus encouraged, Madame du Deffand had made up her own mind when she left Lyons about April 15th. Julie was not so satisfied; she demanded time for further consideration, and the Marquise had perforce to acquiesce.

The project remained thus indefinite for several months, the girl lying hid within the walls of her convent, while Madame divided her

time between Mâcon and Champrond, each proving an equally unsatisfactory place of sojourn. Her friends urged a return to Paris, and spared no efforts to paint the delights awaiting her there. "Why on earth do you fear to return home? With your reputation and income, how imagine that you can lack acquaintances? I do not use the word friends, for I know the rarity of such folk. But I say acquaintances, and agreeable acquaintances! A good supper buys one any guests you please, and, if it adds sauce to the spectacle, men may smile at their guests—afterwards!" D'Alembert was the painter of this genial picture, but he painted in vain. The secret torment of her spiritual isolation, enhanced as she says by "the eternal dungeon" of a blindness now almost absolute, filled her with inexpressible terrors. She caught at any excuse for delaying a new imprisonment within the cold walls of her house, so bare of any comforting affection. From June she post-dates the return to August, and only the chance of finding d'Alembert at the Château du Boulay, the house of their common friend Monsieur du Trousset d'Héricourt, sends her back to the capital under his escort in October. She had not been there many weeks before a letter from Julie brought her dearest hopes to their apparent nadir.

Bred as she had been in the quiet of an obscure countryside, Julie's fears of the Parisian whirlpool increased daily. She hesitated more and more to take the final plunge. "The grand world," viewed from the convent, seemed a place of singular terrors

in which she would find herself an exile, lost to all foothold, even more alone than in her present position. Each prospect owned its terrors, but the known was surely a lesser evil than the unknown. Prolonged consideration led back to her first idea—she would call upon Camille d'Albon to increase her annuity sufficiently to enable her to remain at Lyons, there to remain lost to the world in a quiet yet independent corner of her own. If her brother failed her, but only so, she would accept Madame du Deffand's offer. Great as was her disappointment, the Marquise replied with a fine dignity and self-control. "I am sure," she wrote, "that Monsieur d'Albon will agree to furnish you with what you require. . . . So my hopes fade into the distance! But if he fails you, remember that you are still free to take me at my word, and I sincerely trust that you will then decide to accept my offer." Julie must not doubt the permanence of her good-will. "To be frank and express one's real beliefs is surely no fault, but rather the best course of action." "Far from bearing the girl a grudge she, therefore, applauds her sincerity," and much as she fears that the stream has carried her hopes away, "she will not love her the less for that." "Farewell, my queen," she concludes; "you can show our friend (Cardinal de Tencin) this letter. I have no secrets from him in respect of yourself."

Having thus recovered her freedom, Julie no longer hesitates to make her demands upon Count d'Albon. She did this frankly enough, giving him

an outline of the argument which we have traced, and concluding with an exhortation "to give me an answer to the point." The reply came quickly enough. It was both very much to the point and negative at all points, for while the young Count was completely opposed to Paris and the idea of living with Madame du Deffand, he as clearly gave Julie to understand that neither now nor hereafter must she count on any addition to the annuity left her by her mother. Hard as this last may seem, Camille's attitude is explained and justified by his financial position. His father was still alive, and what small income he inherited direct from the Countess d'Albon had already been seriously curtailed by a series of unfortunate speculations. Moreover he had, in 1750, married a young lady of small fortune and mediocre nobility; a marriage justified more by considerations of the heart than of the brain. A son had already arrived to increase his obligations. Four other children presently followed. "I will show you exactly how I stand," we read in one of his letters, "and you will see how impossible it is for me to give you any financial help. I have children to provide for, and provision of this sort is not found by the roadside. Placed as I am, the advancement of my children must be secured by other means than the expenditure of money." These are good reasons, and perhaps Julie did not clearly comprehend how true they were, for she was deeply hurt and irritated both by her brother's refusal to help her, and the manner in which it was made. Her intense spirit, carried

away by a too lively imagination, saw in it a disavowal of their alliance, his denial of the bond of their common blood. Disappointment blotted out her many vows of eternal friendship toward the friend of her youth, and filled their place with a dull and bitter hostility that soon extended to all that side of the family, and that has left numerous traces in her will no less than in letters. Even twenty years later Abel de Vichy was to read, "I told myself that all my life long I should have reason to complain of all who bore the name of d'Albon, or belonged to the family in any way. This, I was sure, was my destiny."

The result of Julie's disappointment was immediately seen. She would exchange her provincial existence for a Parisian life, her quiet convent room for the worldly mansion of Saint Joseph. The Marquise was, of course, immensely delighted, and replied forthwith: "I trust, my queen, that you will not find it necessary to change your mind again. No more fears, I pray you! I trust that May will see us settled in mutual content, me with you and you with me." The affair was by no means concluded, however, for the first whisper of Julie's resolution roused both families. The Vichys and d'Albons joined in a universal outcry. Now as always, they are afraid lest she may be scheming to efface the taint upon her name, and, in the words of the Duchesse de Luynes, "they fear that Paris may give her the counsel and means to obtain a *position*." Madame du Deffand's precautions inspire them with no more trust than

Julie's written promises to "forget who she is," and to be no party to "even the smallest attempt." So importunate do they become, indeed, that the Marquise changes front in her replies, and bids them rely on the extremely problematical nature of such "attempt" rather than on Julie's promises. "I am not sufficiently foolish to suppose that any such reasons as friendship, gratitude, or fear, would prevent her endeavouring to recover her status, if the prospect seemed at all hopeful. But since there can be no hope, and she sees this as clearly as any of us, I have no reason to believe that she will embark upon such a folly."

Madame du Deffand, one cannot but observe, knew little of her friend's proud and upright nature when she wrote thus. Under no circumstances, not even when her life's happiness was at stake, could Julie be capable of dealing falsely with her plighted word. The pride of this passage, written towards the close of her life, is fully justified. "How undeservedly have I been praised for moderation, nobility, disinterestedness, and the pretended sacrifices made by me to my mother's memory and the house of d'Albon. Heavens! but I deserve none of your compliments, good fools! My soul was not designed for the pettiness which fills your own. Made wholly for the joys of loving and being loved, I have never needed either strength or honesty to enable me to bear with poverty, and to disdain the benefits of vanity."

The violence with which the two families opposed the scheme, placed Julie and the Marquise

in a sufficiently delicate position. The former especially, unknown and unsupported as she was, certainly had reason to doubt the welcome which she might expect from Parisian society under such conditions. Madame du Deffand, fully alive to the point, exercised consummate address in combating the danger. Her friends take the field a month before Julie's arrival: first Tencin, a favourite at court, and feared by all on account of his audacity and power for intrigue; then Hénault, the Queen's friend, and the best known man in Paris. The ground was scarcely prepared by these means, when Julie's protector turned directly to a quarter support from which alone would suffice to break down all resistance. The Duchesse de Luynes, always an indulgent aunt to the Marquise, enjoyed a recognised authority in the family and society alike, thanks to her rank, character, and her known intimacy with Marie Leczinska. To gain such an ally was as good as to win the battle, and Madame du Deffand spared no diplomacy, no effort of her pen, to win this aunt to her side.

Nearly all the facts that I have recounted find place in the incomparably able letter pleading this cause, a veritable masterpiece of policy and insinuating eloquence, careful and studied throughout, and packed with appeals to old memories. Monsieur and Madame de Vichy are never reproached or made the objects of any direct accusation, but an inquisition by rule would be a thousand times less overwhelming than this nicely calculated string of suggestions and discreet regrets.

Appeals to the heart of the Duchesse recur continually. "I am a blind woman, Madame. I am praised for my courage. But although I shall gain nothing by yielding to despair, I certainly feel all the pains of my situation, and nothing can be more natural than to try and lessen them. And what better help can I afford myself than by bringing some friend into my house, a companion who will relieve the pangs of my loneliness! I have always feared that; it overwhelms me utterly now." Such is an exordium taken from the letter. The peroration is no less pathetic: "I am not looking for a servant. My need is for a real companion, and a possible companion is not easy to find, as you know. I confess that I shall not relish annoying the family. . . . I shall vex a prejudice of theirs, and obtain a happiness which is essential to me. Really, there is no proportion between the two things. Madame, I have opened my whole heart to you. You love me, and I am unhappy; but your compassion is no less signal than is your righteousness."

Madame de Luynes' reply, by no means long delayed, was reserved and full of wise counsel, but might none the less be read as a species of assent. Madame du Deffand chose to take it as such. She adroitly overwhelmed her aunt with thanks, and at once proceeded to action.

The Archbishop of Lyons was begged to supervise Julie's preparations for the journey. She herself forthwith prepared Parisian opinion, according to the judicious campaign long since

prepared in her own mind. "I shall give out . . . that you are a young provincial lady who desires to enter a convent, and that I have offered you shelter until your choice is made. . . . I shall always avoid the appearance of seeking to introduce you. I propose to raise your value, and if you really know me you should never be disquieted by the manner in which I shall treat your self-conceit. . . . The world must know your worth and qualities first of all, and this the help of myself and my friends will easily secure for you." All Paris, indeed, was shortly aware that a particularly interesting young woman would presently become a resident at Saint Joseph's. If an air of mystery clung to the new-comer, her attractions were certainly not diminished by this.

These dispositions made, the Marquise informed Julie of the result of her efforts, and pressed her to set out forthwith. "I have just received my answer from Madame de Luynes, and have no fault to find with it. I trust that I shall never have reason to regret my efforts on your behalf, and that you would never have decided to join me unless your mind were fully made up. . . . So much I had to say. I will only add, that your coming, and the prospect of your companionship, are an inexpressible joy to me." The letter ends with these lines, which surely bear the stamp of real feeling: "Farewell, my queen. Hasten your packing, and come to be the joy and consolation of my life. It will be no fault of mine if that hope does not prove reciprocal."

The Attorney-General of Lyons and his wife happened to be journeying to Paris at this time, and at the instance of Cardinal de Tencin undertook to safe-conduct their interesting fellow-traveller. Thus, one day in the latter half of April 1754, the Lyons coach drew up before the gate of the Convent of Saint Joseph, to leave there a girl of about twenty years of age, somewhat provincial in appearance, a trifle nervous and frightened, but a girl none the less happy, and with a heart big with hope.

CHAPTER III

The Convent of Saint Joseph—Intimate life of the Marquise du Deffand—Influence of the new life on Julie—Her first friends—The Maréchale de Luxembourg—Preponderant influence of Madame du Deffand on the intellectual formation of Mademoiselle de Lespinasse—Similarity in character and spirit—The honeymoon of their alliance—Good feelings endangered by instinctive coquetry of Julie—Her first conquests: the Chevalier d'Aydie and President Hénault—Her first romance: Viscount de Taafe—Prudent intervention of Madame du Deffand—Her moderation throughout.

The House of the Daughters of Saint Joseph of Providence filled the spacious site now covered by the various buildings of the Ministry for War. To the left of the Hôtel de Brienne, to-day the Minister's official residence, stood a building separated from the main pile by a little court opening on Rue Saint Dominique. Here, apart from the nuns' own quarters, a certain number of discreetly elegant apartments were let out to women of the world—unmarried ladies, widows, or such as lived apart from their husbands. While covered by the mantle of their pious neighbours, these tenants were in all other respects free to live as they might desire. They had their own servants, and owed no obedience to the rules of the convent.

Madame du Deffand lived in the apartments formerly occupied, after her flight from Court, by Madame de Montespan, the protectress of the house. A relic of her tenancy were her arms still ornamenting the central stone of the great

chimney. The quarters were bright and comfortable, although of no especial size. "I have a very pretty and exceedingly convenient apartment," the Marquise writes to Voltaire. Records of the time give an inventory of the drawing-room and its furnishing. Deep sofas and little couches, artfully disposed between small tables piled high with books, formed a constant invitation to familiar discussion, and clearly displayed the tastes of their owner.

Larger parties met in this room. A less formal and more simple apartment, contiguous to the larger piece, was the scene of more intimate gatherings. At the corner of its fireplace stood a great chair, the Marquise's famous "throne," the high back of which curved forward until the top formed a veritable canopy above her head. Several seats and a bookcase were arranged close by, while a cabinet in the angle of the wall displayed some fine pieces of china. A deep recess at the back of the room contained a bed draped with flowered chintz, and a little dial on the wall witnessed the passing hours. This chamber was really Madame du Deffand's bedroom. Her apartment was completed by an antechamber, dining-room, a small room for Mademoiselle Devreux—a devoted body-servant of the Marquise, who was little less than her personal friend—and another chamber for Wiart, factotum, butler, secretary, and occasional reader. This famous lodging Madame du Deffand, in her own words, "never left except to sup out." Julie at first occupied a room within the convent proper, but not many months elapsed before her protectress

provided the girl with another apartment, less spacious than her own, but in the same building, and on the next story.

The mistress of the scene is described by Madame de Genlis as "a little woman, thin, pale, and white-haired." She adds, that her head seemed out of proportion large for the body beneath, and preserved few traces of its earlier beauty. Madame de Luynes records that "those who knew her in her youth remember that she possessed the most beautiful complexion imaginable. Her presence was fine, and the expression of her mobile features highly agreeable. Her face was wont to seem singularly animated and intellectual, with beautiful eyes, keen and piercing as a bird's. The attractiveness of this face caused one to overlook the faults in her hands and figure, and the quality of her conversation nearly hid her unfortunate trick of talking through her nose." At the time of Madame de Genlis' description the Marquise's face had come to wear an expression of sadness, occasionally of disillusion and preoccupation; but give her cause to speak or listen, and the cold features light up, a sprite of irony and wit seems to fill their hollows, and the eyes, once so bright but now for ever dulled, acquire light from the inward fires of the mind that really gives the illusion of restored sight. No one, indeed, ever fashioned herself a more clever substitute for so priceless a loss. By the aid of a machine, her own invention, the Marquise could write rapidly and clearly. Her active mind acquired a species of second sight that

enabled her to imagine persons and things, and describe them almost to the life. Madame Necker records, "She is blind in a way which scarcely lets us perceive it, and almost escapes her own notice." "The tones of a voice," adds Hénault, "seem to provide her with an image of the thing, and she is as quick in seizing a point as if she possessed perfect sight. One might almost say that her sometime sight was an additional and needless sense."

The one great change in Madame du Deffand consequent upon her blindness was the inability to endure even momentary solitude. "I should vastly prefer the company of the sacristan of the Minims to passing a single evening alone," she avows. Her entire day, or rather night, is taken up with conversation, dictation, or listening to her reader. At such times she sits in an armchair or the "throne," upon her knees two Angora cats with enormous ribboned collars; animals presently replaced by Tonton, most ill-conditioned of pet dogs, "her adoration of which increases with the number of persons bitten by him." The evil nature of the animal led to Walpole's later advice that he should be consigned to the Bastille daily at 5 p.m., under sure guard. On another occasion Walpole relates how "Tonton flew at Lady Barrymore, and I certainly thought that she would lose her eyes. However, he was satisfied with biting her finger. She was much upset, and wept copiously." Madame du Deffand, far too clear-sighted not to see everything correctly, knowing that she had let Tonton off

far too lightly, proceeded to relate a story of a dog which had taken a mouthful out of a caller's leg. Its tender-hearted mistress, sadly distressed, cried out, "Heaven send that the poor animal does not suffer from his meal!"

News of the outer world and the conversation of her friends are the Marquise's sole distractions. "I never leave my seat, and I never pay a visit." Occupations other than mental she has none, and this perverted existence is seldom lived by daylight; a fact which surely places her in an age "when women sit so late that they are called *lampes*," an age in which the author of a fashionable novel writes of his heroine, "She could suffer almost any disappointment rather than the supreme one of going to bed." The Marquise's day was never properly begun until the hours when nature counsels rest. Six o'clock was the earliest time at which she rose, and from then until far into the morning she received the long array of her guests. When by chance she sups abroad, any excuse is good enough to delay the hour of return. From the Opera she proceeds to visit the Duchesse de la Vallière, the Maréchale de Luxembourg, President Hénault. But this is not enough. At 2 a.m. the entire party is to drive round the town, because, she says, "it is far too early to go to bed." Horace Walpole loudly complains of these nocturnal habits when he chances to share them, notwithstanding that he finds it difficult sufficiently to admire "the herculean frailty" of his septuagenarian friend.

Madame du Deffand's supreme hour was this

of supper. It is her chief joy and the affair of the day, "one of the four ends of creation," she avers, and carelessly adds, "but I have forgotten the other three." Sometimes she sups abroad; more usually, however, it is at home with three or four friends, nearly always the same. But once a week, on Sunday at first, afterwards on Saturdays, a large company sits down with her, and "neither fight nor avoid each other," diverse and often antagonistic as are their personalities. The sole tie between them is that all are brilliant talkers. Never is there such talk as round her table. It is the sufficient luxury for her guests, and they are perfectly aware that the rest of the *menu* will be simple enough. The sauces of one of her cooks, long notorious for his lack of skill, were a constant insult to President Hénault's delicate palate. "Nothing but the intention distinguishes such a fellow from a Brinvilliers," he writes.

The transition from the confined life of Champrond and the convent to the sort of existence just outlined must have proved too surprising to Julie. Wonder, indeed, seems to sum up her first impressions. Looking back afterwards, she writes, "How I hate my inability to care for anything but the best, and how difficult I am to please! But am I at fault, educated as I have been? Madame du Deffand—I must name her my mistress in wit!—President Hénault, the Archbishop of Toulouse, the Archbishop of Aix, Monsieur Turgot, Monsieur d'Alembert, the Abbé de

Boismont, Monsieur de Mora—these taught me to think and to talk, these condescended to find me of some account!" Many of these personages will recur in these pages. A biographer must supplement the list with certain names omitted here, but possessed of a right to inclusion, since those who bore them were among the first to welcome Julie in the *salon* of Saint Joseph, and served her as guides on the first stages of a path bestrewn with pitfalls. The Marquis d'Ussé may head the list. A grandson of Vauban, and thus a relative of the Vichys, this strange and absent-minded old man was certainly a trifle crazed. His manners were original and his conversation erratic, and Hénault complains that "his letters are as full of erasures as his talk is of parentheses." None the less, he owned a charming wit, and was full of interests entirely estimable and good. "All the world loves him, some by natural taste, some because it is the correct thing! Happy the man born good enough to truly appreciate him!" As an habitual visitor at Saint Joseph's, the Marquis was not long in discovering an old friend in his hostess's youthful guest. He had met her when visiting Champrond some years before, and now conceived for her a devoted affection that never afterwards failed.

The Chevalier d'Aydie may be as highly praised. At the house of the Marquise, but thirty-four years earlier, he had met the exquisite Aïssé, the memory of whom is inextricably interwoven with his own. Now in the sixties, but still possessed of the old

youthful spirit and ardent heart, he was a constant member of Madame du Deffand's *salon*, where his often hasty but always generous tongue, and the passionate speech which was but a reflection of his deep feeling, were much appreciated. "He is all for the first thought," writes his hostess. "Monsieur de Fontenelles is credited with a second brain in the place of a heart. The Chevalier might be credited with a second heart. . . . Cross but never grumbling, misanthropical but never bitter, always true and natural in all his changes of mood, his very faults please, and to find him less imperfect would be a real disappointment." The Chevalier was sixty-four when he met Julie, and he at once found her his second Aïssé. One of the first to surrender to her charm, the discreet emotion in his old heart is echoed by the tenderly gentle tones of certain passages in letters to the Marquise. "Heaven owed you the favour which is bestowed on you in the care of Mademoiselle de Lespinasse. In her you find your lost sight. Far greater boon, she evokes once more the goodness and affection proper to your nature. I congratulate myself on my early appreciation of her, and I beg of you to keep me some share in her good opinions."

Less devoted perhaps, but no whit less useful, was another friend whom we see among the band of Julie's first acquaintance. As a peerless counsellor in things worldly, a guide second to none in the complicated labyrinth, full of snares and pitfalls, then called a *salon*, Mlle. de Lespinasse could have fallen into no better hands than those of the

Maréchale de Luxembourg, the woman to whom her contemporaries accorded the sceptre of fashion and the throne of good taste. Notwithstanding a youth so light that it scandalised even the Regent's court, a mixture of haughtiness, happy audacity, and diplomacy not only enabled her to live down the past, but established her as arbiter without appeal on all questions touching the amenities, social decorum, and good taste. The Duc de Lévis calls "her empire over the youth of both sexes absolute. Her house preserved the old tradition of high and easy breeding." She was only passably educated, but possessed an infallible instinct and delicate taste, rarer and more precious than all the wisdom of this world, "perceptions to make men tremble," and was always able to characterise any lapse by just that stinging word which was sure to go the round of Paris next day. Yet the Marechale was no more feared for her harshness than she was sought for her charm. Paris owned no more pitilessly sarcastic tongue or more seductive attractions. "Her flattery," writes the same witness, "is the more effective because so simple. Her praises seem to escape her unconsciously. You imagine that she is kind because her heart is bursting with tenderness."

Madame de Luxembourg's attitude towards Julie was of this latter kind. She was a friend of Madame du Deffand's childhood. They had run almost identical courses, from gallantry to love, and from love to the intellectual life. Few days passed in which the Maréchale did not call at Saint

Joseph's. For her sake, almost alone, the Marquise abandoned her regular habits, and was persuaded, in the season of long days, to visit her friends at the Château de Montmorency, a luxurious abode of which nothing now remains. Julie was invited to share the first of these visits after her arrival, a rare and envied privilege. "This is a great business to your aunt," she writes to Abel de Vichy, "but she has been so pressed that it was impossible to refuse. For the matter of that, she need not alter her habits a bit, for Monsieur and Madame de Luxembourg overwhelm us with attentions, and their guests are all our most frequent companions at home—the President, Madame de Mirepoix and Madame de Boufflers, Monsieur de Pont de Veyle, and the rest." Not long afterwards Julie was again bidden to the Château, this time alone, and treated like a very daughter of the house.

It would be difficult to over-estimate the influence of such intercourse in forming the character of a young girl fresh from the depths of the province. Her quick wits, ready perception, and the power of "seeing at a glance" and "comprehending the half-word," so envied by her friends, made it certain that she would miss no opportunities. Her manners and taste matured at the same time, and her perception ripened until it accepted nothing short of the best and the finest of its kind. The critical precepts of the Maréchale perhaps influenced her too deeply. She had not been long at Saint Joseph's before friends were to reproach her with undue exclusiveness, and a disproportionate

insistence on conformity to the conventions. "From the first," writes d'Alembert, "you were as much at your ease, as completely at home in the most brilliant and critical society, as though you had been born to such surroundings. You felt their ways before you knew them, and thus showed yourself possessed of a nicety and refinement of tact that are rare indeed. In a word, you seemed to guess the language of what are called the best circles. . . ." But he adds only a few lines later, "Your consciousness of this—may I say, your self-consciousness of a somewhat extraordinary gift?—perhaps leads you into the fault of attaching too much importance to the like in other people. Nothing less than the most genuine qualities obtains forgiveness from those who have none, but on this really minor point you have always shown yourself pitiless to a degree." Perhaps no better summary of Mademoiselle de Lespinasse's virtues and failings at this time can be given than this rhymed portrait by a member of the *salon* of Saint Joseph's :—

"Your judgment is faultless, my dear!
Your manners perfection, we hear!
You are witty and joyful,
Polite, and all grace, but
Your temper unequal
A friend may at times cut.

"Your soul, full of motions,
Aye varies its notions;—
At nothing, with wrath you are mad!
If, next moment, you're charming
Again, it's alarming,—
This temple that wobbles—good—bad!

"This portrait to complete
Here, shortly, I'll repeat,
Good grammar you love overmuch.
You discuss it, dear Lady!
Leave that to O'Grady,
Content that our hearts you can touch."

Mademoiselle de Lespinasse certainly profited from her intercourse with the persons among whom she was thrown, but it is possible to remember this and yet allow that the grand influence upon her intellectual development was exercised by Madame du Deffand. Sincerity and common sense were at once her own chief virtues and those upon which she set most store in others. Her own character was eminently natural, and she aspired to a simple truth in all things. She required the same qualities from Julie. "Is it not intolerable," she frequently exclaims, "that truth is the one thing that we cannot hear!" The least mannerism, the most innocuous trick, annoyed her to the point of exasperation.

"She simply cannot endure the least artificiality, no matter of what kind," writes the girl in her severe portrait of the Marquise. "The vivaciousness of her spirit is equalled only by her simplicity. A jest or a witticism leaves her lips as though it fell from them without her intent or even knowledge. Her most amusing hits are never underlined or emphasised by so much as a tone, so that it is only later, and on reflection, that one discovers their quality. Her professed horror of intensity or declamation, and what she calls 'high

falutin,' is carried to the extent of putting a *tabu* on all discussions of 'lofty themes' in her presence, and her detractors charge her with 'hating eloquence and the finer sentiments.'" She certainly evinced little taste for philosophical discussion. On leaving a supper at Necker's house, where conversation had taken a turn in this direction, she wrote to Barthélemy, "I could not follow the reasoning, but the brawling was intolerable." Superlatives, a disease of the age, were her pet detestation, and those who laid down the law, and would hear no reason, were unsparingly snubbed. "I make short work with people," she tartly tells one of them, "since I learned that the world can be divided between the trumpers, the trumped, and the trumpeters."[1]

To her almost perfect sense of form and expression, Madame du Deffand added excellent judgment and much acuteness. "Your remarks on common sense are quite charming," she says to Walpole. "No matter what may be a man's intellectual capacity, it soon becomes wearisome and a bore without this for foundation." The Marquise has a right to speak thus, for a clearer intelligence or more precise reason would be hard to find, so long as she is not excited. Absolute as is her passion, not to say intensity, where the feelings are concerned, she is as completely mistress of herself in the domain of opinions and ideas. An objection convinces her if properly presented, and no opponent can complain that she refuses to yield

[1] "Les trompeurs, les trompés et les trompettes," a play on the words incapable of an absolute rendering into English.—*Translator.*

to argument. Madame de Genlis wrongly accuses her of laziness and want of conviction, but the real explanation of this is that she is always a prey to self-doubt, and so constitutionally sceptical that she is never certain whether she is right or no. Such an attitude, even if tinged with irony, invests her conversation with all the charm of sweetness and goodwill.

A taste for sincerity, simplicity, restraint in speech, the sense of proportion, and a certain eclecticism in ideas, are as characteristic of Mademoiselle de Lespinasse as of her friend and patron. The analogy is clear in the main; it is even more striking when we pass to details. Both have similar tastes in literature and music—a passion for the classics, and a mistrust of all that is new. A feeling for nature is wanting in both. A passion for analysing the human mind, and a high appreciation of the masterpieces of thought, obscure their perception of the beauty of life's pageant and the magic of colour and form. As Hénault once wrote to the Marquise in earlier days, "You call a moonlit night romantic, the thought of the places where one met a dear friend, a splendid day—anything, in fact, of which the poets have used the word. I did not find it a cause for mirth. . . . So be it, then! I ask your pardon for all the streams passed heretofore and hereafter, for the birds their brothers and their cousins the elm-trees. Behold me cured! You will find my letters the more pleasant." Mademoiselle de Lespinasse acknowledges the like failure in herself when she makes

this confession towards the close of her life. "I have always been on the move, been everywhere, seen everything, thought of one thing only! A sick soul sees nature under one aspect only. The world wears crape to its eyes!" This, also, is her appreciation of her friend Roucher's poem, "The Months." "His talent is wholly admirable, but how he bores one with his use of it! Diamonds, gold, the rainbow, these and their like never stir my soul. A word of what I like, its slumbers even, move that part of me which lives and breathes more than all these riches." Madame du Deffand's verdict on her friend the Marquis de Saint Lambert's poem, "The Seasons," is an almost literal replica of this. "There's a trifle too much of purple and azure, gold, pampas, and 'dusky boscage.' I care little for descriptions. Paint the passions and please me. I like the inanimate world best when it is on the farther side of my door."

These are no chance coincidences, for the similarity is unquestionable. It is the more deep and more easily developed, since the two women are partakers by birth in the faults and failures of a common stock. The lessons and example of the Marquise influence her friend, but the influence develops seeds sown by no aid of hers. The resemblance becomes yet more startling when a trick of the intellect, or literary and artistic tastes —the outer husk—are no longer the question. Turn to those characteristics which are inborn, and not to be changed by any education, and

both women are above all, and to an almost equal degree, the children of passion. No one will contest the qualification where Julie is concerned. It is equally true of Madame du Deffand, notwithstanding a certain air of paradox that may seem to attach in her case. Call on her heart, and she is at once all fire and impulse; and this is equally true whether the motive is supplied by a friend, or she is herself touched upon a sensitive spot, however lightly or innocently. "Passion," writes Julie de Lespinasse, "rules the most part of her decisions. The same people or affairs first engross and then disgust her, to excess in both cases. To-day you see her rend the praise of yesterday, laud its condemnations. Both contrarieties are quite honest, and born of the moment's impulse. She obeys with the best faith in the world, and believes that her present opinion is that which she has always held." The friend who knew her best says almost the same. "She has perfect judgment, and her actions are as completely at fault. She is all love or all hatred, enthusiastic to passion about a friend, always thirsting for love—not for lovers!—and the next moment violently but openly hostile." Walpole also adds this exclamation: "I certainly do not share Madame du Deffand's opinion that it were better to be dead than to love no one."

This is the real Madame du Deffand, a very different woman from the one depicted in her letters. Her apparent dryness and boasted egoism are simply the mask adopted by a disillusioned and proudly revengeful soul, ever crying for love and

unable to find it—at least, never able to believe in it. This key unlocks the riddle of the last bitter word addressed to her secretary of forty years' service, Wiart, when she heard him sob by her bedside. "You mean to say that you really love me?" she cried, surprised and stupefied to find affection and devotion in a quarter where she had never imagined that self-interest and custom could own a rival.

This constant hunger "for love," fervid enthusiasm for the pleasure of the moment, and the over-imaginative temperament which replaces facts by fancies, are equally characteristic of Mademoiselle de Lespinasse, and the source of nearly all her woes. But Julie is a trifle less defiant than her friend, a little sweeter and more tender in disposition, and this finer and more delicate sensibility is matched with a generosity that readily confesses its own faults, or pardons those of others so soon as the first heat has passed. Often, indeed, she is susceptible to excess, so that even legitimate indignation gives way to affection, gratitude, or old memories. This witty saying about her suspicious patron could never be applied to herself: "It is easier to stand well with Providence than with her, for with her a venial sin blots out the memory of many careful years."

I have now pushed comparisons far enough to show the points of contact, and how far common were the sympathies of the two women whom destiny cast into the closest intercourse. It is easy to foretell that this very resemblance of

character must, sooner or later, produce a profound antagonism. At first, however, and for many years, no cloud seems to have cast its shadow on the clear horizon. When Mademoiselle de Lespinasse afterwards writes, "I, who was *for ten years* a victim of her spite and tyranny," she unconsciously commits a real injustice. Recent suffering, as is its wont, has overshadowed the kindlier memories of early days, and she illustrates her own saying: "All pain strikes deep, but pleasure is a bird of quick passage." The simple truth of the matter is, that an alliance of the kind has been seldom contracted under more favourable conditions. Its "honeymoon" lasted longer than could have been expected. No evidence can be clearer than the words of both women. "Mademoiselle de Lespinasse is particularly touched by the kind things you say of her," the Marquise writes to the Chevalier d'Aydie in July 1755. "When you know her better, you will realise how entirely she deserves your praise. She pleases me more every day." Madame du Deffand was then alone at Montmorency, Julie having been detained at home by a slight indisposition. Yet brief as was the separation, a bare week, the couple exchange daily letters. Those from Julie breathe the sincerest tenderness. "At last I have heard from you, Madame. It was entirely natural that I should not hear until to-day, but I have none the less grumbled at the privation. If you could understand what your absence costs me, that would be worth, if not a second

baptism to me, at all events a second agony of the same kind. It is strange, but none the less true, that this agony was one of the happiest experiences of my life, since it has enabled me to convince you of the tenderness and reality of my attachment to yourself."

Words like these might be held plain flattery did not Julie's letters of the next year confide like sentiments to Abel de Vichy, and bear witness to an intimate accord between the two women. A slight misunderstanding has annoyed the Marquise, and her nephew at once charges his sister to stand his ambassador before her, a mission in which she is perfectly successful. Intercourse at Saint Joseph's shows no trace of tyranny or superciliousness on the one hand, of subservience or a sense of inferiority on the other. All, on the contrary, points to a friendly equality, the familiar relation of persons of the same rank with no other distinctions than those which are the fruit of their different ages. The one mothers the other with no hint of command. The other defers, but consciously and as to her equal. It may even be well to state that there is no evidence to support the idea that by coming to reside with an old and blind woman Julie became a reader or secretary. These were the functions allotted to Wiart, occasionally to Mademoiselle Devreux. If Mademoiselle de Lespinasse occasionally performs their duties, this is purely voluntary on her part, an act of good nature. She receives neither emoluments nor salary, and if

Madame du Deffand offered to secure to her "an annuity of four hundred livres" when the scheme was first broached at Champrond, this vague promise never assumed the form of writing, and certainly was never put into effect. Both retained their independence, and no question of money was to be the storm-centre from which trouble issued.

Julie's troubles in regard to her patron are the consequence of her youth and personal charms. "I am naturally suspicious," Madame du Deffand early confessed to her, "and from the moment that I think a person is in any way dealing craftily by me, I lose all confidence in them." She would have confessed herself more truly had she added that she was jealous, and that, well as she could love a friend, she demanded that this friend should prefer herself above all the world. The girl whom she so imprudently took under her roof doubtless tried her much in this respect. Julie was no coquette in the common sense of that term, a term inapplicable to a loyal and lofty nature, incapable of pettiness and opposed to all mean manœuvring. D'Alembert can certainly be believed on this point. "There is nothing false about you. You desire to please, not on account of vanity, which is wholly foreign to your nature, but because you both wish and need to make your daily round as smooth as possible." This friend is, however, equally truthful in his second verdict. "I know no one more generally popular than yourself, and few who keep a more level

head in despite of this. You are certainly ready to make the first advances when others do not forestall you in this regard, but when a person is as sure of her friends as you are, she naturally busies herself in enlarging their number." Julie seeks to please because it is an instinct with her, a need of her nature, and not because it is a habit, still less a policy. Indifference on the part of those whom she may meet makes her uncomfortable in a way not clearly to be defined, and which is more than half subconscious. But it haunts her until she feels that the ice is thawing under her personal charm.

Few of those who frequented Saint Joseph's were able to resist the power of this "magician." The Chevalier d'Aydie was an early victim, but President Hénault proved no distant follower. He was now seventy, half deaf, and by no means irresistible. Late hours and good dinners had ably seconded the ravages of age, and Walpole crudely avers that his bright eyes and rubicund complexion made him "appear the complete drunkard out of time." But he remained courteous, amiable, and witty, quick to fashion a quatrain or turn a madrigal, devoted no less than always to the ladies, and far more careful to please them than many a younger man. All contemporaries agree that he fell a complete victim to Julie. Early in their acquaintance he composed her "portrait," a document that is to all intent a declaration. At no time, however, did he deceive himself as to possibilities, witness this lamentation: "One would

take some trouble to turn your head, if the effort were not a certain loss of labour." La Harpe asserts that the "trouble" taken by the old President amounted to serious thoughts of marriage. It is scarcely necessary to add that any such labour was "lost," whether its end were marriage or merely to secure the lady's affections. Julie gave him nothing beyond gratitude and respect, with a flavour of affection, and he had the good taste to proclaim himself satisfied by this much.

The feelings of Mademoiselle de Lespinasse for another admirer, like Hénault a frequenter of the *salon*, though no native of the banks of the Seine, can hardly be set out thus simply. Few details of this brief episode have come down to us, so few that the identity of the man who first stirred her passionate heart was long disputed. The story, as I have pieced it together from various documentary sources, may be written thus: One of the oldest Irish families, that of the Viscounts de Taafe, divided into two distinct branches during the eighteenth century. Lord Carlingford, of the elder line, emigrated to Austria and found a residence in Vienna. Viscount de Taafe, a descendant of this man, and son-in-law to the Imperial Chancellor, played an important part in Austrian politics, and was several times employed on missions to Paris. He has been wrongly held the recipient of Julie's friendship and love. Her real hero was his cousin, a member of the younger branch of the family which remained loyal to England. He and a brother were well

known in Parisian society, being accustomed to pass long periods in the city. Theobald de Taafe, the elder of the two and an M.P., met with an annoying adventure during such a visit in 1752, being imprisoned for three days in consequence of a quarrel at the gaming tables with a Jewish usurer named Abraham Payba. Released, and acquitted of this man's accusation, his reputation suffered little hurt. Only two years later, we find him presented at the Court of Versailles by Lord Albemarle, the British Ambassador, and meeting with an excellent reception. Theobald's younger brother, whose Christian name appears in no paper, shared the same favour, and is the hero of our story.

This young man left politics to his elder brother. A *littérateur*, and possessed of a pretty wit, he preferred philosophical circles, and was not averse to general society. A passage in the Duc de Luynes' journal records, "he supped with me last night, and had the honour of playing at cavagnole with the Queen." He was a friend of one of Madame du Deffand's most faithful followers. A Scot by birth and Parisian by preference, John Crawfurd, "a young man of excellent heart," according to Walpole, was young, impetuous, sincere, and only too eager to devote himself. This Crawfurd was de Taafe's sponsor in the *salon* of Saint Joseph's. His reception pleased him so well that he returned almost daily. Madame du Deffand was not slow to credit this devotion to her young companion rather than to herself, nor to understand that the wittiest talk round her supper-table counted with

him for much less than certain conversations in a convenient corner of the big room. She was the more alarmed by presently perceiving that Julie's response to all this was on a very different plane from that meted out to the Chevalier d'Aydie or President Hénault. The young girl seemed, indeed, to be slipping into the sweet insecurity of a real attachment.

So little has come down to us about the attractive visitor, that we are ignorant of his age, his fortune, or his intentions ; even whether he was married or no. Whatever the facts, the Marquise considered the flirtation compromising to her friend, and resolved to put an end to it. Miss Berry, legatee of Walpole's papers and also of those of Madame du Deffand, asserts that the latter's conduct of this delicate situation was irreproachable. "There are here," she writes, "letters in which Monsieur de Taafe explains his feelings towards Mademoiselle de Lespinasse, and his gratitude for the manner in which Madame du Deffand safeguarded her interests. These letters prove that on this occasion at least the Marquise treated her friend as prudently, carefully, and affectionately as any mother. But the elder woman's remonstrances evoked obstinate resistance, and she learned, perhaps with some surprise, the real Julie de Lespinasse, so wise, so tractable, and so prudent, when her heart is not moved, but, once touched by love, violent, uncontrollable, excitable almost to insanity. Good advice and exhortations proving useless, the Marquise perforce resorted to other

methods in order to combat "such wrong-headedness." She invoked the authority conferred by age, experience, and the fact of consanguinity. Julie was forbidden to see the Irishman, and formally ordered "to keep her room" whenever he called.

The consequent scenes, part temper and part tears, can only be guessed from the summary account preserved by Madame de la Ferté Imbault. One salient fact is, however, recorded on the nominal authority of the Marquise. "In her rage, the young woman took such a dose of opium that the consequences affected her for life." La Harpe has a similar entry, but he assigns neither date nor reason. "Her previous excitement reached such a pitch that she determined to poison herself. She swallowed sixty grains of opium. The dose failed to produce the desired death, but she was thrown into the most terrible convulsions, and her nerves suffered for life." Madame du Deffand wept bitterly beside her bed, on which, believing herself dying, the girl observed, "You are too late, Madame." Notwithstanding these two recitals, one may believe that the facts are exaggerated. Madame de la Ferté Imbault says that she had the tale from the Marquise on the morrow of the latter's final breach with Julie. La Harpe, dramatist by trade, stands convicted of having already several times travestied and "romanticised" the story of Mademoiselle de Lespinasse. Moreover, one of the girl's own letters, written to Abel de Vichy at about this time, con-

tains a less tragic and more probable explanation. "I know what tricks our nerves can play by my own experiences. I have had such violent attacks that I still wonder how my health has not been permanently injured, but troubles of the kind seem to have the advantage of never affecting one permanently." It seems a lawful supposition that the girl was powerfully excited at being crossed in love, and that she now began the baleful attempt to control her nerves by repeated doses of opium which remained her curse to the end. A dramatic imagination, or the enmity of a gossip, could easily twist this fact into the story related above.

But whatever the truth, calm was re-established with better speed and more ease than need have been expected. Whether discouraged, or bowing to Madame du Deffand's desire, Monsieur de Taafe left Paris and returned to England. The Marquise seems to imply that the pair corresponded none the less, but if this is true their letters rapidly became less frequent, and shortly ceased. Julie de Lespinasse is usually prodigal with the story of her sentimental episodes. Her correspondence ignores Monsieur de Taafe, and she always insists that the Marquis de Mora was the first who moved her heart to real love. One naturally infers that this little romance was less a passing passion than an imaginative episode, one of those youthful predilections that begin by seeming a storm ready to sweep the world, clearing almost as soon as formed, and leaving no deeper mark upon the soul than a passing gust leaves on the

changing surface of the lake over which it has blown.

Madame du Deffand stands justified in the issue for wisdom and foresight alike. She has also a right to this act of justice—that her conduct towards Julie is, thus far, beyond criticism. The notorious faithlessness of her old admirers, their exclusive preoccupation with her guest, the flirtation begun under her roof, and persisted in against her express desire, the daily increasing importance assumed among her friends by the girl whom she could so easily have forced to play the part of a simple companion, all this and more she has accepted without apparent objection. Such forbearance is remarkable in a woman of her kind, and it will not last indefinitely. Her temper rises directly the sharer in Julie's misdemeanours is no longer a superannuated gallant or a casual stranger, but the dearest of her friends, the man who has filled the first place in her *salon* and heart for ten years past. The name of d'Alembert has already appeared in this narrative, and it is now time to definitely construct the portrait of the man who, for many years to come, exerts a preponderant influence on the career of Julie de Lespinasse.

CHAPTER IV

Youth of d'Alembert—His daily intimacy with Madame du Deffand—His character, and relations with women—First meeting of d'Alembert and Mademoiselle de Lespinasse—His tender feeling for her—Madame du Deffand feels injured—Her changed attitude towards Julie—Similar resentment against d'Alembert—Comedy of *The Philosophers* and consequent quarrel—Journey of d'Alembert to Prussia—His letters to Julie—Last episodes in his friendship with Madame du Deffand—Clandestine "first receptions" in Julie's apartment—Discovery by the Marquise—Violent scene between the two—Their definite separation—d'Alembert bids farewell to the *salon* of Saint Joseph's—Despair and constant hatred of Madame du Deffand.

THRICE famous—as philosopher, author, and yet more as a geometrician—the personality of d'Alembert is one of which it would be idle to trace a complete portrait in this place. He is less known as the private citizen, with whom alone we are here concerned. In respect of birth he is, as already indicated, a curious parallel to Julie. Both are the issue of an irregular attachment, and of women of the highest rank. His mother, the Marquise de Tencin, like Madame d'Albon in similar circumstances, retired to the house of one Master Molin, surgeon to the King. But here the parallel is broken. His mother, far from risking everything to keep her child under her own eye, abandoned him forthwith. On the seventeenth day of November in the year 1717, a policeman found the infant on the steps of the Church of Saint Jean-le-Rond, in the parish of Notre Dame. He was

immediately baptized, under the name of his sanctuary, as Jean Baptiste Lerond, and put to nurse in the Picard village of Crémery, near Montdidier. Six weeks later, an agent of his natural father fortunately discovered the child and brought him back to Paris. This father was the Chevalier Destouches, a commissary of artillery popularly called *Destouches-canon* to distinguish him from a namesake. Libertine as he was, the man was sufficiently honest and tender-hearted. Returning from a commission abroad, he learned of the child's birth and abandonment at the same moment. As a married man he dared not claim his son, but he immediately made provision for his infancy and subsequent education.

Madame Suard relates a picturesque story, told her by d'Alembert himself, of the rough soldier scouring Paris in his carriage in search of a nurse. But the infant, rolled in his cloak, was so weakly a creature, "with his head like an apple," and hands "like spindles," terminating in fingers "small as needles," that no woman would accept responsibility for a baby "which seemed at the last gasp." But his wanderings came to an end at last in the Faubourg Saint Antoine. Madame Rousseau, a good soul and wife of a simple glazier, received the miserable object in sheer pity, saved his life by her care, and was his veritable mother until Destouches considered the child old enough to be put to school. I need not dwell on the boy's scholastic success. He rapidly passed as Bachelor and Master of

Arts, was successful in the Schools of Law and of Medicine, and finally established a threefold reputation in geometry, chemistry, and medicine. The reason for the manner in which his name was meanwhile changed is not apparent, for the original Lerond was successively transformed into d'Aremberg, d'Arembert, and finally d'Alembert.

Destouches died in 1726, leaving his son the modest income of 1200 livres, sufficient for his simple needs. He lodged with his adopted mother, the glazier's good wife, in her "hovel" in Rue Michel-le-Comte. In this obscure corner society suddenly fell upon d'Alembert, elevating him in a day to the position of a favourite, one of those chosen guests for whom Paris scrambles during the brief period of their fame.

If Madame de la Ferté Imbault is to be believed, the honour of this discovery belongs to Madame Geoffrin. The latter, famous huntress of every kind of celebrity, and especially desirous of attaching the rising stars, annexed the wise young man whom all, masters and fellow-students alike, conspired to laud as a "prodigy," the coming genius, and admirable no less for his simplicity than as a wit and a person of unquenchable high spirits. Surprising as it seems to-day, d'Alembert's first real success was due to the latter reputation. If society did not pet him as its "fool," he was at least its "entertainer," and in this guise he found entrance into the "kingdom of the Rue Saint Honoré." A peerless recounter of comic tales, he possessed "a particular talent for mimick-

ing the actors of the Opera or *Comédie*, that really made one die of laughter. . . . Finding this trick successful, he set himself to parody Messieurs de Mairan and de Fontenelle and other visitors at my mother's *salon*, a whim which won him a reputation for ill-nature." Abbe Galiani corroborates this, and cannot refrain from imparting to d'Alembert himself the wonder with which the Neapolitans receive his account of his celebrated friend, "the little man, who imitates others and is as haughty as can be. They, one and all, seek to make you out as large as Saint Christopher, serious and bearded, a very Moses or Michael Angelo."

The fame of this charming guest spread rapidly through the *salons*, and soon reached the most worldly circles. With these, if some complained of his "inexperience," d'Alembert was none the less successful, for the world does not smile less at a witticism or laugh less at a parody because their author is a trifle raw and ingenuous. Few, naturally, imagined that this "schoolboy truant," and joyous comrade at the supper-table, had worn the daylight out in his miserable lodging over columns of figures, calculations of "dynamic forces," a laborious astronomical problem; or that this "idle fellow" owned one of the most luminous and profound intellects of his day. "He amused them," Madame du Deffand records, "but they never deemed him worth a more serious thought. Such an entry on the world might excusably disgust him, and he was not long in beating a retreat." The writer of these lines exercised a powerful influence

in opening the young man's life, showing him the vanity of so facile a success and its inevitable effect on his dignity. Having demonstrated the necessity of relaxation after severe mental efforts, she offered him the hospitality of a house where he would find a nicer discrimination, and would be treated in better accord with his real worth. Their long friendship was the result.

The couple first met in 1743, in President Hénault's *salon*, and mutual attraction was not long in ripening into intimacy. The Marquise du Deffand was then lodging with her brother the Canon, close to La Sainte Chapelle, and not far from the young philosopher's poor abode. Few evenings, afterwards, saw them apart—he deferential to, and confiding in, this woman of such high place and amazing intellect, she motherly and protecting without assumption, more ambitious for him than he was for himself. It was as, she says, "the golden age of their friendship." Her removal to Saint Joseph's threatened to break in upon this daily intercourse, since they now lived at a distance from each other. Count des Alleurs condoles with Madame du Deffand about this time. "I am vexed to think that you and Monsieur d'Alembert will see less of each other now that you have moved to the Convent. The Faubourg Saint Germain cannot easily replace so witty and necessary a friend, one, too, with such varied accomplishments, despite his supreme excellence as a geometrician." The tie survived this trial, however, and when in the summer of 1752 the Marquise left Paris to hide

her grief and blindness at Champrond, d'Alembert found the city so dull and empty that he was overtaken by a fit of misanthropy which accorded ill with his usual sprightly mood. "I am now," he tells her, "a hundred times more enamoured of retirement and solitude than I was when you left Paris. I seldom or never dine or sup elsewhere than at home, and this sort of existence suits me admirably."

These solitary habits did not, however, make d'Alembert any less anxious for the return of his old friend to the hospitable apartment where he promises to bear her constant and faithful company. He will dine with her as often as she likes, always provided "that no third person is allowed to intrude," and he willingly permits her to fulfil her vow of "sleeping for twenty-two hours out of the twenty-four, for so long as we pass the remaining two together." Her gratitude for these promises is quite emotional. "I am truly eager to see you, to talk with you. . . . We will have many dinners alone, and we will confirm each other's resolution to allow our happiness to depend on no one but ourselves. You will—perhaps?—learn to tolerate men, I to do without them!" "He is my intimate friend and I love him passionately," she writes to Mademoiselle de Lespinasse about the same time. These are no vain words, but matched with deeds, for the renewal of old ties which followed on Madame du Deffand's return to the Convent was, if possible, marked by even greater warmth than heretofore. It culminated next year, when the Marquise moved heaven and earth to secure the

election of her favourite, now for the third time seeking admittance to the Academy. The Duchesse de Chaulnes supported Abbé Trublet. Both women used their arms without scruple, and there was a truly Homeric battle between the beauty of the one and the intellect of the other. D'Alembert alone seems to have remained calm, and when he refused to assure himself the vote of President Hénault by praising the latter's *Abridged Chronology* in the Encyclopædia, his patron lost all patience. "I decline even to mention the thing," he retorted, "for it's impossible to say a word more than that the book is handy, useful, and has sold well—praise that is scarcely satisfying. . . . Not heaven and yourself, nor yourself alone, shall make me add another word." D'Alembert was finally successful, and we may be sure that, triumphant as he was, one friend was yet more jubilant.

This brief sketch of his youth will serve to indicate d'Alembert's character. However stiff-necked in the face of constraint, or inclined to stand upon his pride to the point of sacrificing both pleasure and interest to his independence—thus justifying Madame du Deffand when she nicknamed him "A Slave of Liberty"—he was still a man of rare temper, agreeable, easy to live with, even—in his own words—"easy to lead, provided that I do not see the guiding hand." While intellectually sceptical and incredulous, ready to quarrel with old beliefs and secular traditions, he is, at the same time, almost ingenuously simple in his dealings with other men, incapable of a

feint, still more of a lie, and so at the mercy of ill-faith on the part of others. This singular contrast explains the diversity of contemporary judgment upon his character. To a casual acquaintance or superficial eyes he appears cold, dry, caustic, bitterly ironical. Real friends, be they never so few, find him frankly affectionate, devoted, zealously active in their interests. This portrait of himself is sufficiently just. "No man is more moved by the welfare or sorrow of his friends. They haunt his rest and banish sleep. He will make any sacrifice to help them."

His attitude towards woman is full of like contradictions. Poverty, self-containment, and a passion for work, shielded his youth. If he knew the meaning of temptation, he certainly did not share the dissipations of his comrades at college. Later, suddenly launched into very real life, his heart was stirred, but old habit covered its emotions with a veil of discreet and almost perfect silence. An irrepressible talker, brilliant and overflowing with wit at a crowded table or when faced by an audience, he was no sooner alone with one of the fair inspirers than his voice is gone, he is artificial, stupid, and clumsy, ready to snatch the first excuse for flight. Certainly, he did not meet with much encouragement, but this was not on account of any physical defects. He was built on the small scale, slight, moderately well dressed, "his hair negligently combed," but of perfectly presentable manners and appearance. His features, at all events in youth, were of the kind "which

attract no remark, good or bad," notwithstanding that a certain malicious gleam in the eyes, and frank features, united to give his face a certain attractiveness. None the less, he was by no means popular with the sex, and when he enters this story, at the age of thirty-seven, d'Alembert claims no further conquests than the daughter of his old nurse, Mademoiselle Rousseau, "a little person who turned my heart for a moment," and who returned the inclination. But even this mild essay in Platonism does not seem to have lasted out the spring!

D'Alembert's persistent discreetness, coupled with the piercing, almost "yapping" quality of his voice, was turned to unpleasant account in the gossip of his enemies. A remark went the rounds, said to have been made by a witty lady in reply to the fervid exclamation of a partisan who cried, "Why, the man's a god!" "So!" ran the retort. "If he were a god, he'd make a man of himself pretty soon!" Even his friends permit themselves a strange licence. Monsieur de Formont writes to say, "The Duchesse de Luynes thinks that you lack certain talents indispensable in a great man. She says that you are no better than a child, and would be trusted as such even by the Grand Turk. I, at all events, take no stock of such sayings, and am assured that you would play your part excellently in whatever you undertook to do." I should not have touched upon this point but for its possible bearing upon the relations between d'Alembert and Mademoiselle

de Lespinasse, and I will now leave it. Whatever the degree of credit due to the philosopher, his conduct was little less excellent than his heart was sensitive and hungry for affection. Called dry and egotistical, his nature was in reality cramped for want of objects on which to expand. While apparently indifferent, he constantly hungered for opportunities to bestow his affection, and sadly aspired towards an undiscovered paradise. To quote his autobiographical portrait once more: "This feeling slumbered in the deeps of his soul, and the awakening was terrible. Having consumed his best years in thought and study, he was to share the sage's discovery of the emptiness of human knowledge. With Tasso's Aminta he has cried, '*I have lost all the years wherein I was not learned to love!*'"

D'Alembert was in this state of mind when, one April evening in the year 1754, he met destiny in the person of a charming girl, like himself an orphan, nameless and without fortune, of exquisite intelligence and manner, and almost thrust upon his daily notice in the dangerous and delicious intimacy of his old friend's home. It seems certain that the philosopher surrendered almost at first sight. The "Portrait" dedicated to Julie in 1771 contains the confession. "Time and custom stale all things, but they are powerless to touch my affection for you, an affection which you inspired seventeen years ago." It seems little less certain that a sweet familiarity, a complete surrender of the heart, rapidly grew up between

them, and that they were confidential from an early date. "I could see their budding friendship," says Marmontel, "when Madame du Deffand brought them to sup with my friend Madame Harenc." A note written by Julie in the year of her coming to Paris proves that she was already her friend's ambassador before the Marquise. "I shall undoubtedly surprise you," she writes to her patron, "by my news. Monsieur d'Alembert goes to Saint Martin to-morrow and will not return till Thursday. He has had no choice about going, as Madame Boufflers commanded him to do so, and is taking him with her to-morrow. He has made me promise to assure you that he greatly missed you while at Montmorency, and that he does not at all relish such a long separation."

Few friendships should, after all, seem less surprising than this, in which almost every circumstance conspired to bring two people together. "Both of us lack parents and family," d'Alembert was afterwards to write, "and having suffered abandonment, misfortune, and unhappiness from our birth, nature seemed to have sent us into the world to find each other out, to be to each other all that each has missed, to stand together like two willows, bent by the storm but not uprooted, because in their weakness they have intertwined their branches." One may conceive of moments in the long hours spent together when the one sheds furtive tears while her companion preaches the patience taught by his stoical logic, the philosophic calm which somehow fails at times.

Grimm, their common friend, says that "Not all d'Alembert's lessons, nor even the example of his own courage, were able to console her for the misfortune of having been born."

Deeply sincere sympathy, absolute trust, and presently warm gratitude for his absolute devotion —sentiments of high value, certainly—Julie never stinted to her friend. But at no time did she go further. Her affair with Monsieur de Taafe proves that it was so in the beginning. The whole story of her life demonstrates that so it was to the end. D'Alembert was probably long in giving her reason to suspect a deeper feeling. His natural self-containment and the morbid secretiveness of a fearful aspirant, as well as the fear of repulse, kept his lips sealed. One of his letters of nine years later, 1763, allows the belief that even so late he had not risked an open declaration. Writing to Julie from Berlin, to recount the King of Prussia's wish to keep him at court and his refusal of the honour, he says: "The King is pleased to flatter himself that I may one day become President of his Academy, but apart from a thousand reasons, *one of which you haven't the wits to guess*, I think that this climate would presently destroy me." This is the most audacious passage in all the twenty-three long letters to his well-beloved which have come down to us, and the passage does not lose in meaning if we remember that the extant letters are copies of the originals made by Julie's own hand, which need have contained nothing that she wished to suppress.

Closely as he guarded his secret, d'Alembert's flames were not the less plain for the blindest eye to see. Learned as she was in the ways of man, the Marquise du Deffand was doubtless far quicker than Julie in observing the exclusive attention lavished on her companion, the passionate cult of which she was the object, the complete influence which she was gradually obtaining, not only over the emotions of d'Alembert, but over his tastes, ideas, and even acts. Few things could touch her more nearly than such a discovery, and it touched her in her most sensitive spot. She might have suffered—probably she would have at least excused—a less exalted error, a love in which the senses were concerned rather than the spirit. She would certainly have suffered less from something of the kind than in now seeing slip from her control the man whose genius she admired, and whom she considered her eternal subject. "She is jealous neither of sympathy nor of wits," Julie was to write of her, "but only of preferences and attentions. These she never pardons, whether in those who bestow or those who receive. She seems to arrogate to herself the words of Christ, and to command all who come into her circle, '*Sell all that thou hast and follow me.*'" Walpole makes a similar reproach at a later date. "You are exacting beyond all belief. We are to exist for you alone, and while you poison your days by suspicion and mistrust, your friends are driven away through the sheer impossibility of pleasing you." Jean Jacques Rousseau is to the

point. "She did not fail to see that I was neglecting her, and of course this was more than enough to put her into a rage. One cannot fail to see how dangerous a woman of this kind may be, but I prefer the scourge of her wrath to the curse of her friendship."

Mademoiselle Rousseau, daughter of a poor glazier, had once earned the "aversion" of the Marquise—all for a spring-fancy of d'Alembert. One can imagine the feeling roused by this spectacle of a real and lasting passion, of the heart and of the brain; a romance unfolding before her very eyes and in her own house, of which the heroine was the girl whom she had found in a far province and taken to herself, made a part of her own life, had, as it were, adopted. Injury was piled on injury when she realised that the rival was her real equal by birth no less than intellect, and that youth and presence stood all for her, all against herself.

Far from our being astonished at the way in which this affair moved Madame du Deffand, she should probably be credited with much forbearance. For the space of several years she mastered her feelings, was able to repress the dumb anger that fed upon her, and maintained at least a semblance of the motherly relation so imprudently assumed towards the girl. Doubtless she still hoped that this would prove no more than a second passing attraction, one of those aberrations of the spirit from which not philosophy itself may preserve a disciple, and called to mind her friend Duches

saying in a similar case, "Friendship sleeps while love wakens, but friendship profits in the end." She did not lose her patience until love finally confessed its conquest, possibly its proscription of friendship, until she no longer owned so much as a corner of the heart which another had taken whole from between her hands. She was too clever and too proud to give way to complaints or reproaches even then. Smothering her pain, she changes her conduct not at all, makes no effort to break in upon the daily meetings, or in any way to separate the two inseparables. Her growing displeasure with the girl finds expression only in shades—a colder tone, an affected reserve, more petty demands, a closer holding of her to minute duties, above all, a new insistence on the fact that she is a poor dependent in a painfully false position. And all this comes about as it were by accident—nothing striking in act, no wounding speeches, but a nice malice behind the spoken word or the tone of the voice, a something that makes the most innocent phrases sting.

Few things hurt a nervous and impressionable nature more than the repetition of such pin-pricks. Julie is hurt in her pride and wounded in her heart. This constant rejection of, these misconstructions placed upon, the real affection and gratitude with which she has repaid Madame du Deffand's earlier kindnesses, chafe her, and the weight of the chains so lightly worn until now grows daily less endurable. The enforced waiting upon a "blind and vapours-ridden old woman," the obligation under which she

labours of sharing the Marquise's habit of "turning day into night and night into day," of constantly sitting by her bedside, often of reading her to sleep, all the duties readily assumed when she believed them repaid with affection, now seem an insupportable imposition, an odious servitude. Her moral weariness and heartfelt disgust find undisguised confession in these lines, addressed to a friend: "Fontainebleau and l'Isle-Adam have completely swept away the society in which we live—not that I should greatly care, were it not for Madame du Deffand. Personally, I should be perfectly happy never to go out, and never to see more than the five or six friends who are more or less necessary to my happiness or amusement. But these days as they are fill me with admiration, or rather affliction. They are an eternal constraint and privation. Possibly once in a month I may have the good fortune to do something by my own wish, yet I promise you that there are very few moments when there is not something that I should like to do, or some taste that I would gladly satisfy. Confess that, if I have greatly raised myself in your esteem, your idea of my happiness has fallen pretty low."

Witness of her troubles and first confidant of her complaints, d'Alembert became more and more vexed at heart, and rapidly estranged from the old friend whom he accused of cruelty and injustice. Hurt by his coldness, the Marquise did not spare him in turn, and a succession of stinging words and rebuffs deepened the breach. Matters were at

this pass when, in 1760, the trouble was suddenly aggravated by a futile incident recorded by Madame de la Ferté Imbault. It appears that the Marquise, in a letter to Voltaire, gave free rein to a "very bitter" pen on the subject of their common friend, d'Alembert. Voltaire's reply alluded to these acid remarks. A few days later, the malicious old woman turned a conversation to the subject of these letters "to amuse the company," and begged some one present to read them aloud. D'Alembert had meanwhile entered the room unannounced, as was his custom. He heard the letters read, and affected to laugh at the incident. But he was profoundly hurt, and the mathematician Fontaine, a witness of the scene, "and as able to calculate characters as figures or lines," having carried the whole tale to the *salon* of Madame Geoffrin that same evening, concluded his narration with the prophecy "that d'Alembert would take a very interesting revenge on Madame du Deffand, and that his instrument would be Mademoiselle de Lespinasse." He certainly complained to Voltaire, who took his usual way out of the difficulty—denied everything, and asserted that his word was enough to refute any evidence to the contrary. He had the effrontery to write, "Know that Madame du Deffand never sent me the letter of which you complain. She apparently let fall some observations, or you said something to her which provoked reprisals."

This denial naturally carried no conviction, but d'Alembert was shortly offered the means of re-

taliation. Palissot's comedy of *The Philosophers* appeared just at this time—a violent manifesto against the entire Encyclopædist clan. Madame Geoffrin, Diderot, d'Alembert himself, all the leaders of the host whose head was the master of Ferney, were brought upon the stage and mercilessly ridiculed under the most transparent pseudonyms. Every writer's pen was instantly out, sharp as a sword, and Parisian society divided itself into two hostile camps, the one applauding, the other reviling Palissot. Madame du Deffand was among the few neutrals in this war of words, or, more exactly, the Marquise confined herself to jeering at either party, lashing Encyclopædists and "saints" with a fine impartiality. D'Alembert was immensely annoyed. He wrote to Voltaire, denouncing the Marquise in terms that do little honour to a philosophical mind. "The avowed female patrons of this piece are Mesdames de Villeroy, de Robecq, and du Deffand, your friend and formerly mine. This means nothing else than that these creatures have a hand in the game and . . . profits."

D'Alembert's act was nothing short of treachery, being simply an attempt to cause a breach between Madame du Deffand and her oldest and most illustrious friend. But Voltaire was for once his better self. "Madame de Robecq," he writes to the Marquise, "has had the misfortune to protect this piece and procure its presentation. I have been told that you have a hand in the enterprise, an announcement that pained me greatly.

If it be true, confess yourself, and so I shall give you absolution." The Marquise's reply was equally dignified. "You have heard something pretty bad about me? I am an admirer of the Frérons and Palissots, and a declared enemy of the Encyclopædists? I deserve neither such honours nor such slanders. . . . Far from joining myself to Madame de Robecq, I have declared my opinion of her revenge and of her instruments alike. . . ." A later passage in the same letter shows that she is aware of the source of this accusation, and the lines are clearly marked with the pain and indignation that the treachery has caused her. "If duty bids raise the hue and cry against the enemies of the philosophers, I confess that I have done nothing of the kind. Friendship alone inspires one to take a hand in this sort of quarrel. A few years ago, friendship would very likely have led me into many stupidities. To-day I should be an unmoved onlooker at the strife of Gods and Giants. Here, we have rats and frogs!"

Her conduct was as sober as her words. Neither complaining nor reproaching, she sought a frank explanation with d'Alembert. A more or less real reconciliation followed. "I forgot to tell you," the philosopher writes to Voltaire, "that Madame du Deffand and I have patched up peace, for what it is worth. She asserts that she has had no dealings with either Palissot or Fréron. . . . Therefore, kindly do not tell her of my complaints. It would mean more squabbles, and I have no relish for such." The Marquise added a last word to the

affair, sorting things out and defining her position with exactitude and skill. "I have been particularly impartial in this war of the philosophers. I cannot admire their Encyclopædia. It may be admirable, but the few articles that I have read bore me to death. I cannot accept as legislators men who have plenty of brains, a trifle of talent, and no taste at all. Monsieur d'Alembert I except from this condemnation, even though it was he who slandered me to you. I pardon his error. His reason is, after all, one that merits some indulgence. He is as honest a man as lives, with a big heart, plenty of brains, much common sense, and a good deal of taste in a good many things. But on certain matters he has become a party man, and here his common sense fails him."

I have detailed this poor squabble at length because Julie de Lespinasse is the real cause of it, although she never appears and her name is never mentioned. At once cause and object, she has set the pair at enmity—quite unintentionally, of course—filled their hearts with secret animosities, and transformed a friendly alliance into that state of prepared neutrality which must sooner or later lead to open war. To our eyes, the rupture is already accomplished. Years of grace may postpone the inevitable, but only at the price of embittering the misunderstanding, prolonging it, and increasing the pain of three persons surely made for mutual affection and understanding, but now irremediably embroiled by the passion that disturbs their judgment and defies their will. The delay is, however,

kind to the memory of Mademoiselle de Lespinasse, for a final breach at this period must have branded her with shameful ingratitude. Hitherto, however bad her temper—an excusable fault—Madame du Deffand has not been seriously unkind. Contemporary and current opinion can only agree upon this point. Later, on the contrary, her conduct wears every appearance of injustice and tyranny; and even if this appearance be due in part to that supreme awkwardness of which only the cleverest persons are capable, the conduct of a few moments then neutralises the endurance of years, and she embarks on a contest from which she cannot emerge with even the bare honours of war.

Julie and d'Alembert naturally grew more intimate as they became more embroiled with the Marquise. Proof of this is a consequence of the philosopher's Prussian journey, taken in 1763, on the conclusion of the treaty which closes the Seven Years' War. In common with a majority of the Encyclopædist leaders, d'Alembert had, throughout this war, given constant expression to "his tender interest in the success of the King of Prussia, the philosopher-ruler!" He now offered his warm congratulations on the Treaty, notwithstanding that it signalised the defeat of France. Frederic replied with a pressing invitation to Potsdam, and the "Marquis of Brandenburg," as Père Paciaudi was pleased to call d'Alembert, considered obedience necessary, little as he relished it. Every post from Prussia during his three months' absence brought Julie a long letter, giving the traveller's observa-

tions and experiences in minute detail. The originals of these letters are unfortunately lost. They survive only in copies made by Julie's own hand, transcripts plainly abridged, expurgated, and lacking in detail, except in the rare passages which contain matter of personal interest to the pair. But d'Alembert's absolute confidence in his correspondent is clearly to be seen, no less than his constant thought of her, and the preponderant influence which she exercises upon his every decision.

When Frederic presses him to come into permanent residence at the Court as President of the Berlin Academy, with an apartment at Potsdam and a salary of twelve thousand pounds, d'Alembert declines these alluring offers despite his poverty, just as he declined those of the Empress Catherine, who, the year before, proffered a hundred thousand pounds for life as the fee for "educating her son." As in the previous case, the official reasons for his refusal are poor health, the rigorous climate, and his taste for retirement, but the real reason is that which is discreetly hinted in his letters to Julie. To be separated from her would be too painful, how painful he knows well enough, thanks to the present brief exile. "Don't imagine," he writes, "that my reception here is turning my head. It is only teaching me once more how precious is friendship, for not all the balm that could be poured upon the greediest self-conceit can replace that." Overcome as he is by the praises showered upon him during this stay at Potsdam, the honours bestowed

upon him, the charm of the royal conversation, "charming, amusing, pleasant, and instructive," he sighs for the day when he may return to the joys of familiar talk with Julie and her playful lectures. "Do not flatter yourself," he writes, "that I shall be less of a tease when I come home, or better behaved at table. It is true that I must not play tricks here, but be sure that I shall have to make up for many arrears."

Once only do these letters name Madame du Deffand, and then in such a way as to prove that she has no cognisance of this correspondence, and no part in its confidences. "I will write to the Marquise, if possible by this post. The King asks whether she is still alive! You may imagine how I shall congratulate her on being the subject of such a question. I will add one or two of His Majesty's sayings. They should secure him her best approval." The letter follows a few days later—the only one to her address during the whole three months of his absence. It is stilted, constrained, and frigidly polite. "You have allowed me, Madame, to write to you about myself, and to ask how you fare. I am only too ready to avail myself of the leave. . . . I will content myself with assuring you that, despite the whirl in which I am living, I never forget the friendship and graciousness with which you are pleased to honour me. I like to believe that my affectionate attachment to yourself makes me in some part deserving of them. As I know that nothing wearies you more than to be asked to write a letter, I must content myself

with asking you to send me your news by Mademoiselle de Lespinasse. . . . Farewell, Madame. Take care of your health. My own remains good."

The Marquise's reply to these reserved and conventional lines is couched in a very different strain. Far from charging Julie with the task of answering, she immediately takes up her pen. In her large sprawling hand, the hand of her blindness, she accepts as good currency the phrases in which his heart had no share, and proposes in touching terms a full reconciliation, a renewal of friendship, a return to the happy days so suddenly and so completely passed. This letter—hitherto unpublished, I believe—contains more of the real Madame du Deffand than her most famous epistles—doubtless a jealous woman, imperious, exacting towards those whom she loves, but generous, faithful, and warm-hearted. "No! no, sir! I delegate the giving you news of myself to no one, still less will I reply to the most charming letter that you have written to me otherwise than with my own hand. Reading it, I saw myself at La Saint Chapelle twenty years ago, you as pleased with me as I was with you. This letter indeed recalled the golden age of our friendship, and made me happy by reawakening my tender feelings. Let us begin there, and love each other as we used to do. I do not think that either of us can do better. Believe me if you can! . . . Farewell, my dear d'Alembert. I am, and I shall always be, unchanged for you. Never doubt that, and love me in your turn."

But the appeal failed, and the unanswered letter contains the last flicker of their friendship. The old stress returned with d'Alembert's re-entry to the *salon*, late in September. Relations were more strained than ever yet, and each party prepared for the open warfare which must come. In the following January, Voltaire risks a discreet question, astonished at the Marquise's silence on the subject of her constant visitor. "Do you still enjoy the pleasure of frequently seeing Monsieur d'Alembert? Not only does he possess wit, but his wit is to the point—a great matter!" The answer was as curt. "I often see d'Alembert, and agree with you that he has plenty of wits!" Henceforward Madame du Deffand ignores his name. It follows the name of Julie de Lespinasse, long since banished from her correspondence, and thus the storm gathers in heavy silence.

The ensuing scene is so well known, and has been so often repeated in history and even in novels,[1] that it seems almost gratuitous to repeat it here. I may, however, give so much of it as is needful to the continuity of my narrative, insisting on certain details to which my predecessors have not given proper attention. The origin of the scene, at all events its external cause, lies in the curious disposition of her time affected by Madame du Deffand—a disposition best resumed in her own words. "Five hours of the night I

[1] The most notable example is Mrs. Humphry Ward's "Lady Rose's Daughter."

devote to my own reflections. Four or five hours exhaust all that is worth reading. Somewhere about midnight I sleep for two or three hours. I rise very late, and my visitors arrive about six." A little later than the last-named hour, towards seven, d'Alembert was used to arrive, returning to his glazier's cottage towards nine. Ostensibly he never varied these hours, but he had latterly contracted a habit of coming somewhat earlier and visiting Mademoiselle de Lespinasse in her own apartments on the next story. These hours were the couple's most delightful time, and if it be necessary to prove their innocence one need only mention that they were frequently joined by a few special friends—Turgot, Chastellux, Marmontel. These little gatherings presently assumed the form of a regular institution. The small room was the scene of a miniature *salon*, a "first reception," familiar, clandestine, hidden from the stormy jealousy of Madame du Deffand, and doubtless invested with the particular attractiveness of the forbidden and the mysterious. Naturally, and despite all precautions, the discovery had to come, and one's only wonder must be that this discovery was so long delayed.

The catastrophe occurred late in April. Chance or an indiscretion suddenly revealed the terrible secret, and Madame du Deffand's surprise and rage were equally unbounded. Her furious imagination distorted and aggravated the nature of the offence. Joining these gatherings to all that has been indicated above, she construed

them as an abuse of confidence, an audacious defiance, a plot to steal away her friends, and—as Madame de la Ferté Imbault records—an attempt to raise "altar against altar," and this at her expense and in her own house. She demanded instant explanations from Julie, and the interview followed the course only too usual in such cases. Sarcasm gave place to bitter words, and bitter words to those which are never forgiven. Contemporary memoirs, and certain passages in a letter of the elder woman, afford a sufficiently clear view of the quarrel. The entire past leapt to their tongues, the one dwelling on benefits bestowed and her bounties, and on the other's ingratitude. Perfidy and treason were words soon uttered, and the classical simile of the snake which stings the bosom wherein it was warmed. Julie's retort assumed the dimensions of an attack. How was it possible for her to love one who, she has long felt, "detests and abhors" her, who has not ceased to "crush" her under the heel of her despotism, to chafe her feelings, deluge her—and with what guileful wisdom!—with reproaches and recriminations. The immense flood of suppressed feeling, silently gathered these many years, burst its banks and flooded the world like a molten stream.

An outburst of the kind made further companionship impossible. Both felt this, and the final separation was the result of mutual desire. Marmontel asserts that "it was sudden," but the first day's rupture does not seem to have

been final, certainly not irrevocable. The point from which there was no turning back arrived when Julie wrote to the Marquise a few days later: "You have set a date, Madame, for me to have the honour of seeing you. This date seems very distant, and I shall be glad if you are able to bring it nearer. I desire nothing more than to be deserving of your kindness. Be kind to me, and give me the dearest proof of that kindness by permitting me to personally repeat my assurance that my respect and affection for you will continue as long as my life." Lines so full of feeling, affectionate, almost repentant, would have touched Madame du Deffand's heart at any other time. She proved implacable now because her discovery of the "crime" had been followed by an incident which vastly increased its enormity in her eyes. In the first heat of her passion, she fell upon the unfortunate idea of giving d'Alembert his choice. Now, once and for all, he must choose between Julie and herself. There must be no more dallying between them. He found it unnecessary to weigh the alternatives. Without a moment's hesitation, the philosopher made his farewell to the house in which he had been held the oracle, and the *salon* of Saint Joseph's henceforth mourned its most constant member. That she might have foreseen the decision in no way softened the sting of it to the Marquise. It was a blow to which she never became reconciled, which she never pardoned, and never forgave to the girl

in whom she saw the real cause of it. "Without her I should have kept d'Alembert!" she cried, long years afterwards, thus laying bare in one moment the cause of their quarrel and the source of her undying hostility.

Mademoiselle Lespinasse could not have held out her olive-branch at a more unfortunate moment than the morrow of such a scene. "I cannot consent to receive you so soon, Mademoiselle. The words which passed between us, and determined our separation, are still a far too lively memory. I cannot believe that the motives behind your desire for an interview are friendly. . . . What is it that you really want of me to-day? What service can I do you? My presence could not please you. It could only recall the beginning of your acquaintance with me, and the years that followed it—things only fit for oblivion. Still, if you can after all look back with pleasure, and if the remembrance of old days can provoke some feeling of remorse, I by no means pride myself on an austere and inflexible obduracy. I am fairly well able to recognise truth. Sincere repentance may touch me, and so revive the tender feelings and the liking which I once bore you. But, until that time comes, Mademoiselle, we can remain as we are, and you must be content with my good wishes for your welfare."

All thought of a reconciliation naturally vanished in face of this dry and haughty refusal. Touched in the quickest part of her pride, Julie made no further advances. A wall of ice was built up be-

tween the two women, who henceforth became more strangers to each other than if they had never been acquainted. But silence and indifference are not synonymous terms. In each of these two fiery hearts tenderness departed only to let in hate, and hate of that bitter sort which is no whit less tenacious and deep because it seldom finds vent in words. But if the feelings of both parties were akin, it is fair to remember that Madame du Deffand alone permitted hers to lead to action. Her first pretension was the claim to forbid her friends, even her mere acquaintance, to have any dealings with the girl who, she protested, had "odiously misled and betrayed her," and in this way to isolate her. D'Alembert's action, and her fear lest others should follow his example, soon led to a change of tactics. She wisely beat a retreat, for not one member of her *salon* failed more or less openly to side with the youngest, the poorest, and the most lonely. Hénault, d'Ussé, Chastellux, Turgot, Countess de Boufflers, the Duchesse de Châtillon, the Maréchale de Luxembourg, and a host of less important names, seemed to be vying with each other as to which should first offer their sympathy, and promise their continued interest. The Marquise found critics even within her own family. With the exceptions of the Canon of La Sainte Chapelle, too enamoured of his peace to take part in "such a pother," and Madame d'Aulan, "whose one hope was to become her sister's heir," most of the Vichys —Gaspard, his wife, all their children—declared for

Julie. Abel, in the heat of his youth, declared himself in such terms that the Marquise complained loudly to his father and never forgave him. "Your son," she writes to Gaspard, when long afterwards Abel came to Paris, "will hardly be pleased with me. But I understand that he has intimacies of a kind which do not consort with those that I had in view for him. However, a man is at liberty to suit his own tastes and interest."

Thus generally blamed, and in constant fear of further defections, the Marquise had perforce to shut her eyes; but she was bitterly undeceived—and her feelings were long raw. She continued to receive those whom her heart of hearts held renegades, but passage after passage in her letters shows that she no longer either trusted or held them in affection. Ten years afterwards, Walpole, her new favourite and the man who has filled the place of d'Alembert, thinks it his duty to press Conway to abstain from all relations with Julie. "Nothing in the world would so annoy my old friend, not that she would ever tell you so in words. I must confess that I, also, should not relish it. . . . I let myself speak thus because the Marquise has enemies bitter enough to be at the pains of introducing all Englishmen to Mademoiselle de Lespinasse." The Marquise's animosity spanned the breach of death itself. Ten years after the burial of her whom she had called the "Muse of the Encyclopædia," she received from Madame Boufflers a letter, "very well written, very touch-

ing," and overflowing with tenderness. "I was allowing myself to be stirred," she says, "but I remembered her connection with the late deceased, and my heart was shut."

Her pain is her excuse for this fierce hate—a pain the deeper since her pride endeavours to hide it. But an irreplaceable something has passed out of her miserable life, and the ache of it refuses to be hidden. She was so overwhelmed at first that for once her quick pen refused to run. She excuses delay in replying to Voltaire by "the domestic trouble and embarrassment that have overwhelmed my feeble spirit. I was fain to wait for a little more calmness in order to write to you." "You would have me share my thoughts with you," she writes a few lines later. "Sir, what is this you ask? My thoughts are confined to one, a sad one—that life, truly estimated, is capable of but one grand misfortune—itself! . . . You see how sick is my heart, and how ill I choose my times for this letter. But, my friend, console me! Exorcise the black spirits which hem me in!" A fortnight later the key remains unaltered. "All the ills of the flesh, painful and heavy as they are, sadden and diminish our souls less than this traffic and conversation with our fellows." Outwardly, at all events, she recovers, resumes her suppers and receptions, the round of a worldly life. But the savour and desire are gone from them. She has no illusions on the score of those with whom she now allies herself. "I have nothing that ties me to this country now, and I would say of the society around me what

La Rochefoucauld says of the Court: '*It gives us no pleasure, but it prevents our finding pleasure elsewhere.*'" "Twelve people were here yesterday," is her plaint four years later, "and I admired the different kinds and degrees of futility. We were all perfect fools, but each in his kind. All shared a want of intelligence; we were all singularly wearisome. All twelve departed at one, but none left a regret behind." And lastly, when she balances her life towards the end, "I cannot claim to have wanted for the number of my acquaintance, but Ponte-de-Veyle is my only friend, and he bores me to death three-quarters of the time."

Horace Walpole, we may here note, is in error when he reproaches Madame du Deffand for resembling the Englishman who, having lost a friend, at once resorted to the St. James's Coffee-house to choose a successor. The truth is that, from the day of her rupture with Julie and d'Alembert—always excepting this same Walpole, nearly always absent, and whose egoistical selfishness constantly subjects her to pitiless rebuffs—the Marquise possessed no real friend. Her guests are indifferent to her, persons attracted by her reputation or amused by her repartees, no more her friends than she is theirs. Yet others are mere base parasites, "who eat her suppers, wink at each other," and pass jests at her expense under the safe cover of her blindness. Her one really trusted companion is the hired successor to Julie, Mademoiselle Sanadon, *la Sanadona*, as she calls her, a devoted and always attentive old maid, but of limited intel-

ligence and a wearisome babbler. "She is always coming to find me," complains her mistress, "imagining that I cannot dispense with her services, and she is right, for she is to me what a stick is to other old women."

The *salon* of Saint Joseph's is little more than a desert, a place of comings and goings, ever alive with murmured speech. Its mistress knows this only too well, and her complaint to Voltaire does not seek to hide it. "You cannot know, until it has befallen you, what like is this estate of one who has had friends, then lost them irreparably. Give to one in this case some trifle of taste, a little discernment and great love of the truth; put such a one in the midst of Paris or Pekin, or any place you will, blind her, and I assure you that it were well for her had she never been born."

For all these miseries of her latter years, for all the disappointments, all the desertions that fall to her, Julie de Lespinasse is blamed by the Marquise. Turgot enters the Ministry. She at once cries out, "Fourteen or fifteen years ago he was here daily. The Lespinasse separated us, as she has cut me off from all the Encyclopædists." The mere thought of seeing Julie is sufficient to make her furious. Even Walpole, failing to catch a remark, and making an unfortunate reply, does not escape. "I cannot comprehend," she declares angrily, "how you failed to see that I was not talking seriously. I wouldn't owe her my escape from the hangman! I will lose no time in clearing your head of so odious an idea." And so, when

some one brings the news of the untimely death of the woman whom she had once held for little less than her daughter, "Mademoiselle de Lespinasse," she remarks, "died at two o'clock last night. Once, that would have meant something to me. The information has no interest to-day." Next day, speaking with one of her feminine friends, she adds this cruel raillery to her epitaph: "If she is in Paradise, the Holy Virgin will need to keep her eyes open, or she will find herself lost to the love of the Eternal!"

The spectacle of Madame du Deffand closing her days in hatred and despair is a saddening sight, from which we may well turn to the history of her whilom friend, now her enemy, her rival to be, for the exaltation of the one as the other waned was the twofold result of their quarrel. Free of constraint and at liberty to dwell in the full light after dwelling in the shadows, Julie de Lespinasse attained her full stature. Her nature, hitherto intentionally repressed, now asserts its claims to develop, until a wonder of the times is found in the issue from a little provincial, and, as it were, between an evening and the morning, of a Queen of Paris. And this transformation is the magical fruit of her irresistible personal charm, accomplished by the aid of no family name, no silent help, no lavish expenditure! The ten years following the Saint Joseph period of her life are probably those in which Julie was happiest. They certainly saw her her most triumphant, most brilliant self.

CHAPTER V

Mademoiselle de Lespinasse opens house in the Rue Saint Dominique—Her lodging—Her financial resources—Attacked by small-pox—d'Alembert contracts the disease—He enters Julie's house—Their common life—Period of calm and happiness—Their intimacy with Madame Geoffrin—Consequent gain to Julie—Mademoiselle de Lespinasse forms the project of a *salon*—Her immediate success, and marvellous tact in the part—Special character of the *salon* of Rue Saint Dominique—Her influence with her friends—Influence of the new circle on the literary world and the Academy.

One may permissibly read a suggestion of defiance into the situation which Mademoiselle de Lespinasse selected for the home of her rising fame, her "shop of bright wits," as a contemporary called it, on the morrow of her quarrel with the Marquise du Deffand. The choice was a little house at the corner of the Rue de Belle-Chasse, opposite the convent of the same name in the same Rue Saint Dominique, and not a hundred yards from the Convent of Saint Joseph. One Messager, a "Paris master-joiner," was her landlord, and in his modest house Julie established herself almost opposite the windows of her sometime patron. Nine hundred and fifty livres, with "further forty-two livres ten sols as her share of the porter's wage," was no immense price for the second and third stories, but was a severe charge on her budget. The inventory of her effects at decease, and certain unpublished documents shown me by Monsieur Gaston Boissier, furnish us with a sufficiently clear idea of her

resources. Beyond the small inheritance derived from her mother, Julie was at this time the recipient of a pension of six hundred and ninety-two livres from the Duke of Orleans—granted her on July 16, 1754, doubtless through the mediation of Madame du Deffand—and two other similar "life pensions" of uncertain origin, worth six hundred and two thousand livres respectively. These last pensions were granted her under date May 26, 1758, and October 6, 1763. Monsieur Gaston Boissier's papers say that these were charged on "the King's revenues," a statement confirming its counterpart in the *Mémoires de Marmontel*, where a part of the revenues of Mademoiselle de Lespinasse are said to be derived from Louis XV.'s treasury, and to have been secured for her on the personal application of the Duc de Choiseul. She was thus possessed of three thousand five hundred and ninety-two livres, enough to support her with reasonable care, but quite insufficient to allow of "the detraction of a single penny" towards the expenses of setting up house.

Her friends were fortunately at hand. Hénault, Turgot, d'Ussé, and Madame de Châtillon allied themselves to provide for her initial needs. The Maréchale de Luxembourg presented her with a complete suite of furniture. Finally, d'Alembert induced Madame Geoffrin to do more than all the rest together. Far from being Julie's friend, she knew her by reputation only, but whether moved by sincere pity for the distress of which she heard, or from a desire to annoy her enemy and "pet

aversion," Madame du Deffand, she now committed one of those actions upon the grand scale that were dear to her twin passions, ostentation and kindliness. Having chosen her three finest Van Loos, she sold them to the Empress of Russia for the sum of ten thousand crowns. Part of this completed Julie's installation; the remainder her friend invested in the purchase of an annuity of two thousand livres from Joseph de la Borde, richest of "Bankers to His Majesty." This generous gift Madame Geoffrin shortly supplemented with a further allowance of a thousand crowns, but so secretly that Madame de la Ferté Imbault, her own daughter, had never heard of it until she was dead, when the entry was found in her mother's accounts.

Monsieur de Vaines and another unknown donor were responsible for yet further help, three thousand livres of allowance; thanks to which Mademoiselle de Lespinasse was placed in the enjoyment of no less a total than almost eight thousand five hundred livres[1] a year. If this was not wealth, it was a competence, and her style of living was consequently quite comfortable. She employed four servants—a housemaid, a housekeeper, a cook, and a ladies-maid. Her rooms were comfortably and conveniently furnished without being luxurious. On the second story, a minute hall opened into the little drawing-room, in which the woodwork was white and the curtains were of crimson silk. This room was a trifle crowded

[1] Say £400 to £420.

by its array of armchairs, stools, ottomans, and low seats, soft and admirably adapted for intimate conversations. Most of the furniture proper was of rosewood, but "a little cabinet of cherry-wood," a roll desk, a winding-wheel for wool, a marble bust of Voltaire and another of d'Alembert were scattered about. Masson was responsible for the figure on the clock above the chimney-place. Close to this room, and with windows opening upon the street, was the bedroom. It also was upholstered in crimson silk, and contained a deep recess in which a "bedspread *à l'impériale*" veiled a bed "four-foot across," and enclosed by a variety of curtains. A dressing-room and a servants' room filled the remainder of this story; that above it contained the kitchen, the housemaid's quarters, and several "lumber-rooms" not otherwise used at first. Such is a cursory view of the home in which Julie was now to pass twelve years, the last of her life.

The installation was, however, destined to end with an annoying incident, for Julie was scarcely settled-in before she fell ill, and was presently announced to be suffering from small-pox. She had a particular horror of this illness, but had refused to undergo inoculation, now becoming a fairly general practice, owing to a mistaken idea that a childish ailment had been worse than it was, and had so made her immune. "I shall never," she afterwards wrote, "be consoled for having imagined that that was the small-pox. Heavens, what pains and woes the trouble would have spared me!"

Her attack was severe, and her life in danger at one time. "Mademoiselle de Lespinasse is dangerously ill of the small-pox," Hume wrote to Madame Boufflers, "and I am glad to see that d'Alembert has come out of his philosophy at such a moment." The philosopher's devotion proved little less than heroic, indeed. Caring nothing for his own danger or fatigue, he watched by her bed day in and day out, leaving his post only to snatch a few hours' sleep in his distant lodgings. Her recovery, largely due to his care, was very slow, and her health suffered from the consequences for years. These showed themselves in extreme feebleness and terrible neuralgia. Worse than all, her power of sight—an hereditary weakness of the Vichys—was seriously altered, and constant attacks of ophthalmia afterwards compelled her to have frequent need of a secretary. Her face was disastrously marked, notwithstanding d'Alembert's gallant assertion to Hume. "The small-pox has clearly left its mark, but it has not disfigured her in the least." With all deference to this opinion, her once pleasant features were irremediably spoiled, their lines coarsened and their complexion lost. Several passages in her letters admit this, and bravely as she faced her misfortunes she was too much the woman not to suffer acutely from a blow of the kind.

Julie was hardly cured before d'Alembert fell ill in turn. So much anxiety and emotion, and so many sleepless nights, affected his constitution at once. "My stomach could not play me more tricks if I asked it to digest all the manufactures and all

the talk in France!" His Spartan habits and notorious abstemiousness seemed only to aggravate the evil, until he fell into a fever in the spring. This was not grave at the outset, but presently increased until his doctor, Bouvard, during an entire week, declined to prophesy the consequences. He recovered, however, to write to Voltaire: "I thought of applying for my pension to the Eternal. He certainly would not have treated me worse than does Versailles. This fever having set my feet in Charon's barque, I am not sure that I should regret the passage of his ferry. But, whether for good or ill, I did not long have the chance. . . . Either the Devil, who is envious of us both, is a bungler, or perhaps he consoles himself with the reflection that a pleasure deferred is not lost." A period of languor and utter prostration followed this dangerous time, effects attributed by Bouvard to the stifling and unhealthy lodging to which the philosopher clung out of gratitude to his foster-mother. "A little room," Marmontel calls it, "ill-lit, ill-aired, with a very narrow bed like a coffin." "A hole in which I could not breathe," its owner afterwards confessed. No sooner did convalescence permit the thought of removal, than the doctor ordered a less insanitary abode. A generous friend, the financier Watelet, offered his house near the Temple, and with his acceptance of this offer the philosopher made his first escape from the petticoats of his foster-mother. "Oh wondrous day!" cried Duclos at this news. "D'Alembert is weaned!"

We know Julie well enough to need no in-

sistence upon her conduct in the matter of this illness. Taking her place at the bedside in turn, she repaid "like a devoted sister" all the care which he had recently expended on herself. "She established herself as his nurse in defiance of all that might be said or thought," Marmontel says, "and no one either thought or whispered anything but good of it." But this was by no means all. Having saved his life, Julie had no wish that they should be separated anew. The upper of her two stories contained several unused rooms, simple apartments and of small size, but none the less better lighted and more healthy than the miserable "hole" in which d'Alembert had hitherto been content to dwell. He, certainly, could feel no aversion from her affectionate suggestion that she should sublet these rooms for a moderate rental. They would take their meals together, and the most exacting friendship could ask no more constant comradeship. He accepted, telling his friends that the move was made in deference to his doctor's advice. "I feel that plenty of air is essential to my health, and I am moving to an apartment where I can find this." But his sincerity declines this pandering to the conventions when he confesses to himself: "Poor foster-mother, fonder of me than your own children, I have left you at the call of a more tender emotion." The arrangement was soon put in force, and the autumn of 1765 found d'Alembert installed in the joiner's house in Rue Saint Dominique, and sharing the existence of her who had alone possessed his heart for the past decade.

Public opinion apart, intercourse of this almost conjugal kind was clearly dangerous for a woman still young and naturally passionate. Yet the same Julie who was presently to become so careful of the gossips seems never to have had a thought on the score of this audacity. "Nothing," she asserts with perfect self-possession, "matters when one is thirty and, in the common tongue, *pitted*." These probably are no real reasons. Her calmness is no doubt due rather to the consciousness that her heart is safe, and her knowledge of the general belief in d'Alembert's perfect honour. "She finished by living with him," Rousseau maliciously writes, "that is, with honourable intentions, *which cannot possibly have a second meaning*."

Whatever the particular case, or the general laxity of current opinion, we can scarcely believe that this strange situation did not provoke comment at the outset, in any case. When, on his arrival in Paris at about this time, Hume's British simplicity writes what follows, he probably does no more than echo the general whisper: "I have been to call upon Mademoiselle de Lespinasse, d'Alembert's mistress, and really one of the most intelligent women in Paris." Julie seems untouched by such whispers, but her friend is, on the contrary, unduly annoyed by them. His temper is short in this part of the fearful lover and hopeless aspirant, and he thrusts viciously at a harmless gibe from Voltaire. "'*Stay in Paris, if I am in love*,' you write. Why on earth do you suggest that I am in love? I have neither the joy nor the misfortune

of finding myself in such a condition, and, all else apart, I can assure you that my stomach is far too feeble to require any further stimulant than its daily dinner." His annoyance at once fixes upon Madame du Deffand as the real offender, and this without further proof or motive than his anger with her. "It is quite easy to see *who* suggested this impertinence, and why; not that I do not prefer to be libellously called lovelorn rather than attacked upon the other grounds of which certain people are quite capable. I was to be made to appear ridiculous, but ridicule of the kind is sorry stuff." The papers earn a like denial and like indignation when they presently dilate on a possible marriage. "Good heavens, I with a wife and children! My wife-to-be is certainly a respectable person, and one whose charm and sweetness would make any man happy, but she deserves a better settlement in life than any I can afford her, and the tie between us is neither love nor marriage, but mutual esteem and a very charming friendship. We live in one house, but so do two others, and this is the whole basis of all the gossip." Here follows a fresh diatribe against the unfortunate Marquise. "I have no doubt that Madame du Deffand is at the bottom of the scandal. . . . She knows perfectly well that there is no question of my getting married, but she wants to pretend that there is a question of a very different kind. Infamous old cats like her cannot believe in a woman's virtue. Happily, all the world knows her, and its belief in her is equal to her deserts."

The philosopher wasted his time in losing his temper. Far more effective than his angry denials was the tranquil self-assurance of Julie's attitude. Her frank and simple existence, lived in the sight of all, and making no attempt at dissembling, swept away suspicions and malice, closed the mouth of slander, and converted the most obstinate. More quickly than she could possibly have hoped, her alliance with d'Alembert was universally accepted, without a reserve and without an implication. The most esteemed and most irreproachable women, Madame Necker and Madame Geoffrin at their head, made it a point of honour to proclaim the purely platonic nature of a connection which they endorsed by act and word. "Naples," Galiani writes to his friend the Marquis Tanucci, "would proclaim that they are secretly married. Here, no one thinks of so needless an assertion. Mademoiselle de Lespinasse enjoys her own existence, loved and esteemed by all, and with the best society in Paris crowding round her door." Marmontel writes in the same key. "Nothing could be more innocent than their intimacy, and it was respected for what it was. Even ill-nature held its tongue, and so far from finding her repute endangered, Mademoiselle de Lespinasse only became more honourably and more completely respected."

This intimacy was indeed close and familiar. The friendliest husband and wife were never more one in counsel or act. All Julie's interests, even the most personal, are watched over by d'Alembert and are the object of his jealous devotion. Her

dividends are collected by him; he invests her savings. For several years, at all events, their calls are paid in company, and no host dreams of inviting the one without the other. In her only too frequent attacks of ophthalmia he acts as her secretary. Then, be her letters to her dearest friend or dictated from her bed, her bath even, the writing is that of this sure confidant. "This Tuesday, from my bath, in the which I am . . ." opens a letter to Condorcet. Such pages, composed between the pair, often convey the impression of a dialogue, each addressing their interlocutor in turn. "My secretary never knows what he is saying or doing (this is very foolish, the secretary thinks!), and so you must not wonder that he takes July for August. (The secretary replies, that August was the word dictated, and not July, and that he takes down what is said to him.)" But this collaboration often assumes a more serious form, and embarks on more important works. D'Alembert's latest biographer assures us that "the influence of Mademoiselle de Lespinasse is almost continuously visible from the date of their alliance. He loved to have her help in his work, and thus his ancient mistress, geometry, can now claim no more than occasional hours, while he disposes himself for the lighter labours in which his companion can follow him. Julie's hand is constantly mingled with his own in his manuscripts, so that one should rather call them *their* manuscripts. Page after page, signed by him, might just as well be by Mademoiselle de Lespinasse. She inspires every one."

These are happy times for our hero and heroine, happy according to their two natures and kinds, but happy in an almost equal degree. Julie's happiness is founded on the apparent security of this calm existence. Snatched from her natural home when yet a child, and since passed from household to household, always a bird of passage with no fixed ties, she believes that she has now found a port in which she may defy all future storms. She is no less pleased by her new feeling of independence, the ability to satisfy her tastes and choose her own life, subject to the approval of no other mind. Above all, having long suffered from the coldness or hostility of those with whom she was forced to live, she now tastes the profound joy of dwelling in an atmosphere of warm and faithful affection. Her first joy and gratitude finds such lively expression that its language often seems that of love, or such as might at least convey the impression of love to a responsive heart. "You have so often told me," d'Alembert cries later, "that of all the feelings which you have inspired, mine for you and yours for me were the only ones that never caused you unhappiness! . . . You did at least love me for a moment, and, besides, no one either loves or will again love me." Her own testimony makes it impossible to doubt that this quietude, this delirium of liberty, this infinite sweetness of finding herself beloved, flooded her soul with such delights that her happiness reached moments of intensity when she was, as it were, "terrified" by it.

Assurances and warmth of this quality were enough for d'Alembert. His companion's absolute faith in him, the certitude that he is the "first thought of her heart," the way in which her personality stands to him for all that he has missed in life, are ample payment for his ceaseless care and services in her behalf. Long afterwards, when broken with grief, the calling to remembrance of this period in his life, and the weighing of it against all his recent misfortunes, compel him to proclaim himself his friend's still undischarged debtor. An elegy, deploring her loss, breaks from tears into a dithyramb of pure gratitude. "You who loved me, by whom I at least believed myself loved; you to whom I owe some joy or the illusion of it; you whose whilom expressions of tenderness, still so sweet a memory, require more gratitude from my heart than all else that breathes around me! . . ." There is more here than literary exaggeration or poetic hyperbole. Facts attest its sincerity, for when, after seven years of such common existence, d'Alembert succeeded to Duclos' post of perpetual Secretary to the Academy in April 1772, he refused that suite in the Louvre which was one of the appointments of the office. Poor as he was, he never hesitated, but chose to retain his humble rooms in the joiner's house rather than remove to this free and grand apartment. All his gain from the secretaryship was a salary of twelve hundred livres, and out of this he was compelled to "maintain the Academy fire!" "I should save the wood by feeding the

flames with all their fine works," was Madame du Deffand's caustic saying.

The irregular housekeeping of this couple made its bow to society under the ægis of the same woman who had lately afforded such generous help to Julie. Madame Geoffrin was d'Alembert's oldest friend, even if he had neglected her a little during Madame du Deffand's ascendency. On his quarrel with the latter, he hastened to return to his place in the *salon* of her famous rival, and warm as was the welcome extended to the prodigal, its heartiness redoubled when he ushered Julie into the charmed circle. Madame de la Ferté Imbault records her "extreme astonishment when, returning from the country one day, I saw in my mother's *salon* a strange face, which I never remembered to have seen there before, and the owner of which seemed perfectly at home." One easily shares this confession of astonishment, for few women could appear less like each other than this couple. They are poles apart in age, tastes, and character. One was always mistress of herself, temperate and calm, fitness and moderation the constant study, as they were the rule, of her life. The other was all passion, impetuous, and for ever agitated by the fire that she brought to every act of her life. Morellet neatly sums up the contrast by saying that "the one asks nothing but to be allowed to taste the pleasures of society and friendship in peace, while the other's enjoyment is incessantly troubled by the very heat of her own affections." Contrast or no contrast, however, it remains sure

that close friendship sprang up almost at once. Each, doubtless, liked the other for those qualities in which she was consciously deficient, and esteem, founded upon the recognition of a reciprocal honesty and sincerity, strengthened the attraction.

Madame Geoffrin seems to have succumbed first. She, at all events, made the first advances. The old and experienced *virtuosa* in the art of conducting a *salon* and leading conversation was carried away and astonished by the warm animation of words issuing from a sensitive and enthusiastic soul, yet restrained by the finest tact and most sensitive taste. She could not fail to see that such a recruit might add inestimable interest to the conversation, and charm to the gatherings, of which she was so proud. She numbered Julie de Lespinasse among the guests at her Monday and Wednesday dinners, and no sooner was the newcomer admitted than she became the crown-jewel, the chief attraction, the star round which so many famous satellites moved. But Julie's success was still incomplete. Strange to relate, she even conquered the masterful soul which ruled the Encyclopædia, and in whom her contemporaries acclaimed "the hand of Alexander." Madame Geoffrin was presently so enslaved that she could not contemplate the idea of separation from this dear intimate, demanded her constant companionship, and treated her less as a friend than as a daughter—one of those dear spoiled daughters who command rather than obey, and whose desires are law.

Julie can hardly be blamed for accepting so sweet and motherly an affection, the less that she never trespassed upon it. Nor may one blame her if some years of such treatment led her to assume the carriage and airs of a true daughter of the house, yet never to fail in respect or sincere and disinterested devotion. Yet, despite her real innocence, Julie de Lespinasse has not escaped the severest strictures or the most cruel suspicions. My *Royaume de la Rue Saint Honoré* recounted the tale of jealousy, fears, and outrageous imputations directed against her by the lawful daughter of the house, and I have quoted whole pages in which the Marquise de la Ferté Imbault indulges her angry indignation, in the most violent terms, at the spectacle of this "usurping" stranger in undisputed possession of the heart and home of her mother. I have clearly shown the baseless nature of these accusations, but the impatience from which they sprang is natural enough. D'Alembert and Julie—inseparable in this context—were, however venially, in the wrong when they declined to use a proper degree of tact, and over-loudly proclaimed their exclusive position in the first *salon* of the century.

Daily at first, but later twice every day, the pair arrived in company, and remained for whole hours together alone with Madame Geoffrin, or helping to receive her numerous visitors and to lead the conversation. So completely did they feel at ease, and so completely at home, that they frequently caused letters to be directed to the

house. If Madame de la Ferté Imbault is to be believed, the "usurpation" went even further, for she protests that her mother, at one time so excessively jealous of her authority, finally resigned an integral part of it to Julie, who thereafter admitted, or refused admission, to the *salon* at her own will.

One point in all this tangle is all that need be noticed here. Whatever advantages Julie gained from her intimacy with Madame Geoffrin, they were not of that interested kind assumed by persons who did not really know her, and which were as far from her thoughts as they were impossible to one of her character. She reaped great moral advantages, and they were none the less valuable for being of no more tangible kind. Her judgment of persons and things became more moderate. She learned a conduct more clever and more wise, coming to hold her friends by little kindnesses, constant attentions, even, on occasion, by yielding a point or making a real sacrifice. To the lessons and example derived from her septuagenarian friend, she largely owed such calm and repose as mark the early years of her enfranchisement—the years of which she was afterwards to say, that they were the only truly happy part of her life. Nor was she less indebted to Madame Geoffrin, and the friendships made under her eye or among her friends, for the first establishment of her own reputation and the foundation of that *salon* which was afterwards, and for long, the prime interest of her existence.

To found a *salon* was the dream of many women

of the time—and to found a real *salon*, no mere congeries of invited guests, or room through which men pass and are no more seen, but a homogeneous society, a disciplined group with its own especial tone, and a species of moral singleness, however diverse its members, was an ambitious dream in an age when so many established rivals seemed to protest the folly of rivalry. Madame du Deffand was now at the height of her fame, seeing, to quote the Abbé Delille,

"Europe, a threefold circle, round her chair!"

The Marquise du Deffand was avowedly leader of the wittiest company. In Madame Necker's luxurious hotel in Rue de Cléry, a rather grave assemblage was already meeting to discuss the grand problems of to-day and to-morrow, theorising, and formulating the ideas which the Revolution was presently to proclaim as its facts. Three so famous assemblies, to name no others, surely discountenanced the hope that a young and poor woman, and one of irregular origins, could found a rival under their shadow, and this in the poor apartments of a joiner's house, handicapped by a lack of means which was content, says Grimm, to proffer "somewhat to digest" since it could afford neither dinner, supper, nor collation. Her success was no less astonishing than rapid. In the space of a few months, the modest room with the crimson blinds was nightly filled, between the hours of six and ten, by a crowd of chosen visitors, courtiers, and men of letters, soldiers and churchmen, ambas-

sadors and great ladies, the whole innumerable host of the Encyclopædia — leaders, auxiliaries, and sharpshooters alike, each and all gaily jostling elbows as they struggled up the narrow wooden stairs, unregretting, and forgetting in the ardour of their talk the richest houses in Paris, their suppers and balls, the Opera, and the futile lures of the grand world.

D'Alembert's official patronage of, and constant presence at, these receptions was one real and very apparent cause of their success. I certainly shall not contest the intellectual dominance of woman in the eighteenth century, or her governance, on which so much has been written, "unwearied, unassuaged, and without intermission" in the domain of ideas—the period's revenge, so to speak, for so many centuries of masculine supremacy. I would not even deny that woman frequently showed herself worthy of this supremacy by the breadth of her interests, her culture and intellect, her zeal to learn all and understand all, to walk abreast with the times, whether in literature, science, or politics. No age, moreover, has been better aware of the charm and profit with which, be the assemblage never so grave or the theme so high, the lined brows of learned men, thinkers and reformers, may mingle with such faces as Latour has immortalised. Fine features, a lively eye, a laughing lip ready with the instant word, animate and point a debate, moderate the heat of this one or spur the sluggishness of that, bring back to reality thoughts soaring among the clouds, or prick, with

delicate skill, the windbags of theoretical dreamers. "Society," opines Morellet, "needs this condiment as coffee needs sugar. I know men who do not require sugar in their coffee, but I have no respect for them on that score."

A properly regulated *salon* of the time, yet more "a shop of bright wits," habitually sought the discreet presidency and spiritual leadership of one of those patent guides, "the Saints of the Encyclopædia," whose influence had replaced priestly authority among enfranchised womankind. "The necessity under which we labour of passing judgment upon each day's novelty," remarks a clear-headed stranger, "compels each house to maintain a wit, *videlicet* a person to form its opinion on whatever matter is in hand." Every intellectual circle, therefore, owns its philosopher. He gives tone to the discussions, guides opinion upon men and things, and lightly guides the faithful in the narrow way of the new gospel. Fontenelle long played this part in Madame Geoffrin's *salon*. Grimm played it for Madame d'Epinay, and Diderot for Baron d'Holbach. Mademoiselle de Lespinasse found her guide in d'Alembert, first-lieutenant of Voltaire, promoter of the Encyclopædia, and as diverse in his talents as he was a pattern in his morals; possibly the man of all Europe who stood second only to the patriarch of Ferney. "D'Alembert can be found nowhere else," affirmed Abbé Galiani. "Here he is always to be seen, elsewhere never." The lustre and prestige which he conferred on the little gatherings in the Rue Saint Dominique may be imagined,

nor need any further explanation be sought for the instantaneous success of a *salon* which came to birth under such a star.

But, whatever the truth of all this, Mademoiselle de Lespinasse must justly be credited with the feat of having herself fashioned the great place which she holds in contemporary society. D'Alembert might attract men; she held them and made them her own. Chance visitors aspire to become familiars of her circle because she is its leader. She is the "soul and charm" of this variegated company, and her want of personal beauty prolongs rather than hinders the duration of her success, for no woman was yet a loser when she need fear neither the passage of her youth nor the ravages of time. Eighteenth-century taste was not, indeed, enslaved to a virgin soul or a cheek in its first bloom. As a correspondent writes to Walpole, "Englishwomen do not find that the years between thirty and forty bring them their most numerous triumphs. You will see that Paris favours them then far more than when they are extremely young." Julie de Lespinasse was irresistible, but her fascination depended upon far less transitory charms than a pleasant face or fresh complexion. Her success rested, above all, on that marvellous gift incessantly noted by contemporary observers—the power of constantly making herself a new person, of being ever with each and all, of spending on every subject the clear brightness of her intelligence; and all this without seeking to be witty, but rather to draw out the wit of her companions to the fullest possible extent. "She

could bring into harmony persons of the most dissimilar intelligence," avers Grimm, "often indeed those who were very antitheses to each other, without seeming to exert herself in the least. A single adroit word from her gave new life to conversation, sustained it or turned it as she pleased. No subject seemed without interest for her, and there was none in which she could not interest others. . . . Her genius seemed omnipresent, and one might imagine that some invisible charm was constantly turning each man's interest back to their common source."

Grimm's penetrating eye here seizes upon the particular gift, one might say the social secret, of Mademoiselle de Lespinasse. However eager her conversation, it was always refined, elegant, and anxious to please. Her subtle intuition and correct taste immediately perceived the strength and weakness of a companion, what will interest, and the suitable mode of address. "Her talk," says Guibert, "was never above or beneath a man. She seemed to possess a key to all characters, the measure and exact quality of all spirits." Having learned that the surest road to the heart is to seem lost in its owner, her best friends seldom heard her speak of herself, but were themselves her continual theme." She was the soul of a conversation, never its subject, and if this sustained habit implies much contrivance, it cost her less than might be supposed. She was a born taster of the talents and qualities of those with whom she came in contact, and her pleasure lay in unravelling and sharp-

ening these. "My lively appreciation of any interesting quality in my companions made them believe me an amiable person," she once wrote, and she returns to the same theme in this: "I have felt a hundred times that I pleased a man because his spirit or taste pleased me, and the usual reason for liking me is the belief or perception that I am impressed. . . . This proves at once the poverty of my own spirit, and the impressionable nature of my soul. In all this I am neither vain nor modest, but a simple dealer in the truth."

This interest in her surroundings, and capacity for entering into the heart and mind of others, are no doubt a partial consequence of the innate desire to please, and that hunger for conquest, already so well known to us. But all this follows readily on her eclectic taste, that open quality of her mind which makes it easy for her to understand every sort of idea, the various forms of thought, each and all of the multitudinous manifestations of human activity. "I am happy enough in my ability to care for things apparently the very contrary of each other. . . . It is seldom that I fail to see both sides of a question, and those sides are possibly antipathetic only for those who are always in the judgment-seat, and cursed with the incapacity for feeling. . . . I eschew comparisons, and only enjoy." When a friend asks her to justify her approbation of a new opera, she replies, "You know very well that I never think, and do not judge;" and she proceeds to explain that "impressions" are enough for her, for they are real if sometimes extreme. "You

never heard me call a thing good or bad, but I express my likings a thousand times a day, and I can say of all things what the witty lady said of her two nephews: '*I like my eldest nephew for his wits, and my youngest because he's such an ass!*" So expansive a mind is naturally tolerant. "Monsieur d'Alembert has been to 'Harlequin,' and likes it better than 'Orpheus.' Every one's opinion is right, and I certainly will not criticise tastes. *Good* is a word that applies to everything."

One can imagine the easy intercourse and outspoken manner current in a *salon* ruled by such principles. Independence and variety are its watchwords, and the characteristic distinction among all rivals. Madame Geoffrin's flock are bound under a strict law. The tyrannical wisdom and rough tolerance of this arbitrary daughter of the middle classes bind their ranks in salutary fear. The crozier of "Dom Burigny, that short-skirted Benedictine" and guardian of order, is quickly outstretched to snatch back within the narrow way, be the error never so small, any expression or idea, doctrine or person. "One mayn't utter a word," groans a victim, piteously resistant. Madame du Deffand certainly maintains no such policeman, but her profession of enlightened indifference towards large questions, and her disdainful scepticism and horror of "reasonings," banish the highest themes from her *salon*. Morality, religion, or politics are hardly admitted, and, even so, seldom otherwise than as material for raillery and epigrams. Madame

Necker talks of little else than social economics and the political situation. Dissertations rather than conversation are the rule round her table, until her friendly suppers might really seem an assembly of statesmen or some academic session.

More than in any other quarter, perhaps in this alone, the gatherings in the little *salon* of Rue Saint Dominique are exempt from restraint and monotony alike. Words are bolder and more spontaneous here than in Rue Saint Honoré, more serious and deeper than in the Convent of Saint Joseph, less solemn and more sparkling than in the mansion in Rue de Cléry. No subject is proscribed, no restriction imposed. Philosophic and literary questions alternate without effort or apparent intention; politics displace history, and yield to discussions of great events or to the pettiest social gossip. The jest of the day circulates, and last night's play is criticised. Then suddenly, with never a note of warning, some sublime or eternal problem demands attention. "General talk," avers Grimm, "never languished here, but, under no obligation, the company turned to other issues as it felt moved." Here was neither constraint nor yoke—in one word, no barriers but those of decency. Intellect and temperament were allowed full play, and every character had full licence to develop its own bent. And yet, out of this republic of tastes, a very seeming land of anarchy, "the delicate genius" of Mademoiselle de Lespinasse was able to compass a real unity. "She found them anywhere," says Marmontel, writing

of her guests, "yet they were so well assorted that harmony reigned within her doors, as though the company were an instrument of many strings, each obedient to her touch. . . . And her conduct of the instrument amounted to genius." Fear lest she be vexed, and desire to please her, are the only rules under her roof, and suffice for perfect government. She is uncontested queen in the intellectual tourney, and her smile alone stands gage for the challenges of wit or eloquence. The best encouragement and the rarest recompense are her smile or an approving word.

Julie de Lespinasse was exceptionally fortunate in that the members of her *salon* were almost always her friends—yet another point in which her circle stands alone among all competitors. Madame Geoffrin is feared, Madame du Deffand admired, and Madame Necker respected. Julie alone is loved. "She had such a gift of sympathy that there was never yet man who, after a fortnight's acquaintance, would have hesitated to confide his story to her ears. And yet, while no woman ever owned so many friends, each was happy in seeming the sole possessor of her affections." Better still, this irresistible motion of all hearts towards a common centre created a bond of sympathy, the sense of unity. In rival gatherings, the new-comer is viewed with hostile eyes, every member jealous of the rest, the whole mass infected with secret hates and mute cabals. Julie's faithful understand, appreciate, and support each other, and one of them cries, after her death, "We all felt friends before

her, because the same feelings had drawn us together. Alas, how many saw each other, sought one another, and were agreed together in her who, now that she is gone, will be no more seen, sought, or desired of any one of us all." This comradeship was purely her work. Her coquetry was of this kind, that all who love her must, so to speak, communicate in their passionate affection for her. All her skill is set to seal and fortify—be the persons, their ideas, or social rank never so different in origin, —a sentimental association, a brotherly alliance, of which herself is both cause, end, and means.

It is hardly necessary to insist on the power of such a mutual understanding, the influence at the disposal of so firm a band of men of the world and men of talent. It was a reasonable enough saying that, if the official assizes of the Encyclopædia were housed in Rue Saint Honore, the little apartment in Rue Saint Dominique contained its "laboratory." Here, in truth, were most often formulated those definite decisions upon men and things which were current in next day's Paris, which created reputations, made and sometimes unmade great men, extended or withdrew the patent of immortality. Here, too, it may be said that the Academy chose its new members. A list of candidates for every vacancy was drawn out within this "family circle," and its favourite was more than likely to carry the real election. D'Alembert's "dictatorship," to use the consecrated phrase—the academical dictatorship which was soon to be made so easy by

his official position as perpetual secretary—seems to have been an absolute control rather than that of a faction-leader. But, despot that he was, his daily counsellor wore the petticoats of Julie de Lespinasse, and he was constantly controlled by the deliberative assembly of her *salon*, even at times subjected to its direct veto.

This assembly, again, finding its credit in the literary world insufficient to stay ambition, presently stretched out a hand towards the ship of the State. If Madame du Deffand once owned "her minister" in Choiseul, Julie de Lespinasse might surely aspire to possess hers in Turgot! Yet, even so, she never abused her power, and we shall see that this passing fortune did not turn her head. Her real ambition lay within the domain of intellect; and within its bounds, for ten long years—though with less external pomp, less European renown, than Madame Geoffrin—she and her friends ruled with a reality, completeness, and directness unknown to this or any other rival.

CHAPTER VI

Friendships of Mademoiselle de Lespinasse—Condorcet—His entire devotion to Julie—He defers to her advice—She plays the part of reason against love in his regard—Suard—Julie secures his election to the Academy—Her affection for, and testimonial to her confidence in him—The Chevalier de Chastellux—Dissimilarity between his character and that of Julie—Her vexation at this, but her just appreciation of his merits—Her great services to him — Women in the *salon* of Rue Saint Dominique — Countess de Boufflers—Madame de Marchais—Jealousy of Julie on their account—The Duchesse de Châtillon—She wins Julie's heart.

"HERE," wrote Sebastian Mercier in his *Tableau de Paris*, "the man of sense must choose himself a woman-friend. Here, there are many of them who, accustomed to think from an early age, are more free and more enlightened than elsewhere, overpass the barriers of prejudice, and possess themselves of a man's strong soul, yet never relinquish the sensibilities of their sex. . . . Woman can prove an excellent friend at thirty." The personal chronicle of the eighteenth century clearly demonstrates the truth of this passage. It is an endless record of attachments, loveless in the true meaning of that term, yet in which a woman proves man's faithful and disinterested friend — a friend at once more attentive and of finer and more delicate instincts than a fellow-man can possess, ever ready to help in difficult circumstances, to share his sorrows as well as his joys, and to uplift his soul in hours of trouble or disgrace.

I have already indicated the frequency with

which Mademoiselle de Lespinasse had the happy fortune to inspire this pure and consoling sentiment. She suffered its claims no less, and enjoyed all its benefits and pleasures, while, as her nature was, importing a certain exaltation into both. This celebration of its joys and charms is quite in the lyric vein. "Friendship is my one pleasure and one interest. It sustains and consoles me, and I exist only to love and cherish my friends. Amiable, honest, and generous friends, what do I not owe to you!" When, in the days of distress, she is ready to shrink from the proof, she calls on these same friends to rally her failing courage: "Come, come to my rescue, to give me new heart," she writes to one of them. "Come, that I may say that my day has not been wholly lost! I would blot out from my life each day on which I have not seen a friend!" In the letters of the calm period, soon to come, during which her larger experience plays mentor to the youth of Abel de Vichy, she insistently recommends friendship and the innocent joys of the heart as the grand secret of happiness. "At your age, my dear friend, happiness must be the child of feeling. The harshest burden of old age is that the well-springs of love run dry. Then, the soul becomes warped and bent upon itself, and we live by scorn alone. Be kind to your sensibilities. They are the fount of all true and single pleasures."

Thus Julie counsels her brother, and a moment's survey of the privileged many whose lives touched hers, or who gained a share in the treasures of her

heart, will prove that she practised what she advised. Apart from d'Alembert — unique in his position, midway, as one may say, between that of a lover and a friend—the man who stood highest in her confidence and sympathy was indubitably Condorcet. This selection does not seem the most natural at first sight, for, attractive as was his face, it was still cold and inexpressive, while an extreme negligence in dress and carriage—he was round-shouldered and carried his head bent forward—were not, in society at all events, atoned for by surpassing brilliance. He spoke little, and that usually in monosyllables, and appeared self-absorbed and preoccupied, although few things really escaped a cynical observation of that dangerous kind which no one mistrusts because it is so unsuspected. He was a mathematician of the first order, a member of the Academy of Science at the age of twenty-six, and therefore not unnaturally expected to make himself a great name in this direction. "I thought him a better man than myself," records Fontaine, "and was properly jealous." But this geometrician immediately adds, "He has since reassured me!" Condorcet, indeed, had an insatiable appetite for information; a trait in his character which, leading him to investigate all things and all men, rapidly brought him down to the place of a "populariser," the brilliant interpreter of others rather than an inventor or creator in his own right. This scattering of his abilities, joined to a similar parcelling out of his affections, did not fail to reveal itself to Julie's clear eye. "He works for ten hours a day," she says, with a thought of irony, "and has twenty

correspondents and ten intimate friends. All thirty might, quite naturally, suppose themselves the first object of his thoughts. Never, ah! never has man lived so many lives, enjoyed such opportunities, or found such felicity!"

While these faults might seriously endanger Condorcet's worldly success and scientific reputation, they did but make him a more pleasant companion. The range of his interests and his prodigious memory enabled him to treat of the most diverse subjects, given only a circle sufficiently small not to arouse his timidity—"Philosophy, *belles lettres*, science, art, government, jurisprudence," says Mademoiselle de Lespinasse, "and having once heard him, you must a hundred times a day declare that here is the most astonishing man ever met. One might attribute to his intelligence that especial faculty of the Lord, and call it infinite and present, if not everywhere at all events wherever there is anything." Even his capacity for scattering his affections, and that "universal good nature" which bordered on weakness, invested him with a kindliness to touch any sensitive soul. "He is a free lover," went the saying, "but then he loves well." Contemporaries also unite in remarking his real helpfulness, his active zeal to "sympathise and succour," and this at real personal cost. "Possibly he has never told a friend 'I love you,' but he has never missed an opportunity of proving the fact. Not one of them can ever have desired a clearer attestation of it than he has voluntarily proffered." Julie, author of this encomium, can only call him

'Condorcet the good.' In their most strained hours he is still "Condorcet, the sometime good."

Condorcet seems to have deserved her admiration, although in certain tragical circumstances his conduct did not merit this epithet. But from the day when d'Alembert introduced him to Julie, no attentions were too great for her. Ever at her service and her feet, the least word brings him straight to Rue Saint Dominique. "Here am I back in Paris," he writes to Turgot, "and, of course, off to my usual post as Mademoiselle de Lespinasse's secretary." She was not slow, indeed, to elevate him to the dignity of "vice-secretary"; and when the habitual bearer of the title is absent, Condorcet, at the post, rivals his zeal, and stands only second to him in the heart of their common mistress. "I cannot better express my affection for Messieurs de Condorcet and d'Alembert than by saying, that they are almost a single person in my eyes, as essential to me as the air we breathe. They do not trouble my soul but possess it." Finally, when she is bowed under the sad burden of a secret that cannot, and for good cause, be shared with the loving d'Alembert, Condorcet divides with another, whose name will shortly appear, the confidence, if not in its entirety, still in sufficient degree to be able to perceive its burden of struggles, the pain, and the agony. For such a part he was well fitted, having an impenetrable reserve which made indiscreet curiosity impossible and himself an inviolable repository, certain "to

keep whatever one places within it." His hand is also skilled, and never too obvious, in soothing a wound and quieting the smart of secret stabs, while his fine tact is quick to seize the word that distracts and lulls—truly the right consolation. Thus, little by little, he becomes essential to Julie, nor is she ever at the pains to deny it. "Good God, how I love you for your goodness! You have become very necessary to me, and I should therefore hate you, for my necessities cause me endless woe." The shortest absence calls up regrets for his lost company. She "desolately" finds "my sadness doubled every day until the hour when I shall again see you."

From the height of her ten years' seniority she instils a thought of protection and motherliness into these tender feelings. The advice and good counsel with which her letters to him teem, frequently descend to the smallest details. "My care for your education is concerned even with your absence. Never gnaw your nails or your lips. Nothing is more indigestible, so famous doctors assure me. . . . Look to your ears, which are always full of powder, and to your hair, which is always so cropped that you must really be careful or your cranium will come much too near your hat. . . . You drink too much coffee for the good of your nerves. . . . It is foolish to work at your geometry like a fool, to sup like an ogre, and to sleep no more than a hare. You can be sure that it is I, and not my secretary (d'Alembert), who write

all this, for he could never have composed Voltaire's verse on Time—

'For all consumes him; love alone employs.'

He would have written—

'Consumes him all, and algebra employs.'"

I might quote endless proofs of such solicitude, but Julie's chief concern is with her friend's soul. Here, she is a priceless counsellor, and never was counsel more to the point. Condorcet, the dogmatic writer, and concise in argument, vacillates, and has no will when conduct is in question. "A wad of cotton saturated in fine liqueurs," Madame Roland called him at a later date, and he was even more "saturated" at this time, when he suffered greatly on account of a certain sentiment. Mademoiselle d'Ussé, a heartless coquette, had him in her toils, and was fully employed in playing with flames that she in no sort of way shared. Condorcet, hovering between doubt and illusion, exaltation and despair, was too truly involved to retain a clear perception of her play, and Julie had the courage to open his eyes and help him to sunder the toils. "Pull yourself together," she writes to him, "and abandon a dream from which you will never get either pleasure or consolation. Be happy in your friends, and do not subject them to the pain of seeing you degraded by self-imposed servitude to a person whose friend, even, you say that you can never be. You were never formed to play the tide-waiter, or fill the place of a complaisant person." She repeats the truism that flight before love is

often the strong man's part, exhorts him to "hold a little more by your own strength, bravely remove himself from the sight of so ungrateful a person, and even refrain from all correspondence, whatever the consequent reproaches or pleading. For," she cleverly adds, "this denying you your happiness makes it your duty at least to do nothing in support of a disposition so hurtful to your life. I know very well that a sentiment is often dearer than its inspiration, but to consider how uninteresting one has been to people who might have claimed the sacrifice of very life, is to be not humiliated but disgusted, also, surely, chilled."

In this way, Julie long lifts up her voice in the desert—as wise for another as she is, at the same moment, improvident towards herself. But two years of vain effort bore fruit at last, and she had the joy of seeing her counsel accepted and her friend freed. "I am quite delighted to hear you say that your soul shall no longer be troubled by the kindness or unkindness of Rue des Capucines. . . . Feeling spells so much pain that it should at least bring some reward, and where is this to be found in devotion to a quarter which offers no response?" Here are wisdom and prudence indeed, but there is something as piquant as it is unexpected in Julie de Lespinasse urging, and urging with such warmth, the dull claim of prudence against the waywardness of the heart, of reason against love.

This common-sense discernment of, and passionate desire to serve, her friend's best interests are equally apparent in the relations of Mademoi-

selle de Lespinasse with another man, but little less dear to her than "Condorcet the good." "In God's name," she exhorts Suard, "be interested in your own concerns. I fear that you are singularly negligent there, and the idea troubles me more than a little. I would wish you some joy, did I believe that we find it in this sad life. But some calm and repose we may have, and I would fain see you enjoy them, untouched by the discomforts of ill-luck. I do not fear poverty for myself, esteeming it but the lack of an advantage; but in respect to a friend, I feel it as a real pain." Julie writes to the point, for, "poor enough to die of hunger," Suard had married a girl with no other portion than her intellect and beauty, and was, at least in his youth, precisely one of those men who live from hand to mouth, take no thought for to-morrow, and trust the day's bread to fortune. This exaggeration of unworldliness, part carelessness and part pride, absolutely enraged Madame Geoffrin, titular patroness of the famished writer. Her indignation, when he one day missed a lucrative post for sheer lack of putting out a hand to take it, found vent in the vexed cynicism, "Beggars' pride is luxury indeed!" "Per contra, Madame," was Suard's smart retort, "it's their necessity, for without it what else have they?"

Less brutally no doubt, and certainly with better success, Julie reiterates the same truth, and manfully struggles to establish the fortunes of this careless man. Despite his active resistance, she forces him to stand for the chair in the

Academy left vacant by the death of Duclos. The interesting note which closed this struggle has come down to us: "In reason's name, I demand to be occasionally considered reasonable; and in friendship's name, and that of the tender interest I have in you, I demand that you cease to stand in the way of your own interests, and the desire of the friends who have combined to persuade you to seek admission to the Academy. If only that these Academicians may be prevented from electing a *flat* or a nobody, you are in conscience bound to force them to select yourself. I'm not going to cite the infallible reasons which support such a pretension on your part. Every member of that body, at least every one worth the mention, knows and feels those reasons as well as myself. For heaven's sake, do not fly in the face of justice, right feeling, and interest, and do not hurt me, your friend, by declining to pursue what may be for your pleasure and advantage alike. Farewell! I am ill and foolish, but I love you well."

With marvellous unanimity, d'Alembert's party flung all their weight into the scales in support of this laggard candidate, and Suard triumphed in a stiffly-contested election. But the victory was scarcely won before an unforeseen mischance came to justify his original objections. The King, at this moment embroiled with the Philosophers, declined to ratify the election when it was submitted for his customary acceptance. Prince de Beauvau, at Julie's special plea, argued the cause of a writer "of irreproachable morals, and who

has never written a single word against religion." His generous warmth spent itself in vain. Louis XV. proved inflexible, and maintained his veto, giving no other reason than that "his connections displeased me, and I will have none of such." Suard had therefore to remain on the threshold of the promised land, and Prince de Beauvau was the only person to profit by the affair, since the entire world of letters joined hands to laud his courage, spirit, justice, and impartiality. "For myself," concluded Madame du Deffand, with her usual kindliness, "I could wish that he had reserved them for some more important subject. It's small honour, this protecting pedants and cowards. But I hold my tongue, for what do such things matter to me, after all?"

The Academy was avenged two years later, and Julie with it. The accession of Louis XVI. was, notoriously, considered as a victory of the Encyclopædists over "the devout," of reason and tolerance over "superstition" and "fanaticism." Suard's succession to a chair seemed proof of these new tendencies. He was elected for the second time hardly a month after the new King's accession, and took his place unopposed in the midst of the friends whom the obstinate energies of Mademoiselle de Lespinasse had once more rallied under the banner of his name. Her joy was immense, and a touching delicacy directed its expression to Madame Suard. "I compliment you, Madame, and share your pleasure so truly and with such real interest that I feel tempted to

believe that it is you who should congratulate me. At least, stand persuaded that I yield to no one but yourself the right to claim for Monsieur Suard a truer affection than is mine, or to take a more tender interest in all that touches him. Receive, I pray you, the tender assurance of feelings vowed to you for so long as I do live."

Such enthusiasm might certainly astonish those who judged Suard by his works, and Grimm's critical sense seems to foresee this surprise when he writes, shortly after the election: "Many decline to recognise his title to this honour, but all who know him are persuaded that the man is its sufficient justification." Suard's name, and his real ascendency over his friends, depended, indeed, on his personality far more than on his acts. Tall and finely built, and of a countenance at once noble and thoughtful, his natural distinction rose superior to the airs and graces characteristic of most literary men of the day. He fascinated by an irresistible charm of speech at once warm and deliberate, a conversation now light and now serious, ever varied and never pedantic. His wit was fine, and his discrimination sure, while his kindly and sensible nature made him a most lovable companion. "To succeed so well at all seasons and on all occasions is a gift and not an art," writes a biographer.

These vital qualities explain both Suard's power in life and the disdainful indifference which has since fallen upon his name. They completely won him the heart of Mademoiselle de Lespinasse. His

conversation was one of the attractions of her *salon*, and his kindliness a joy of her life. Their friendship was still young when we find them exchanging notes, lightly coquettish on the one side, on the other almost gallant—a rare thing in Julie's correspondence with her friends. "Would you, were it but for the novelty of the thing, come and dine with me, that is, perish of hunger and boredom? Friendship proposes this; hatred could find no more cruel invitation. I shall be truly pleased if you accept, but your refusal might still be a stroke of luck, for I should not then expose myself to the disgust and weariness that my circumstances, and their effect upon me, must inspire. . . . Farewell, and may the goodness and kindness of your nature supply you with that pleasure which you will not find in my company." "You often complain," he replied in like mood, "that words are unable to express your feelings. You would wound any heart if you measured my words so. A man never expresses his whole feeling, for that has a thousand shades which find no form in words. . . . Alas, you must needs be left to guess all the sweet things, flattery and tenderness, that my heart feels for you. Yet, believe me, there is but one sentiment more real than is mine for you, and that is the one sentiment which you would find in no way welcome."

This epoch is of short duration, for the note soon changes, and banter yields place to sad and serious confidences. When her passionate soul seeks ease in confession, Julie unburdens herself to Suard even more freely than to Condorcet. To

him alone she can speak, openly and directly, first of her love for Monsieur de Mora, later of that which she justly calls her "folly," the passion which saps her strength, and shrouds her last days in remorse and sombre despair. "Good God, why is one coward enough to continue to live when all hope has gone, still more when the search for happiness discovers neither in one's self nor yet the whole world that wherewithal a life may be consoled for its losses!" Suard deserves her confidence at all points. He pities and sustains her, and often argues with her, gently chiding the excessive sensibility that "upsets your works," the undue pessimism of which she seems rather proud. "I left you unwell, and I would fain believe you free of the excessive physical pain that weakens your character and aggravates other pains, dangerously attractive to your imagination. You fear to find yourself well, and you reject the consolations and distractions of time and your own nature. . . . I know well enough how you will treat my remarks or my counsel, but I will not hide a very frequent thought of mine—you are falling into a habit of sad ideas and lamentable imaginings, and the consequences frighten me. Why will you not listen to the voices of nature and of friendship? . . . But what profits it to say—'Be of good cheer!' Unhappiness means the mastery of motions stronger than reason, for reason points the way to cheerfulness. And all this talk just shows how much the thought of your happiness would contribute to my own."

Doubtless the advice proved as barren as Suard

foresaw, but its kindness "touched her deeply," and his friendship was a stay. She tells him that the affection of so faithful a consoler gives her courage to make an effort in the face of trouble. Probably no passage in a letter to a friend contains so much emotion and tenderness as do these lines, penned no long time before her death: "What profits it, then, to love? I love you with all my heart, but that will never advantage you. All that you will ever prove in me is the pleasure that a sensitive and honest soul like yours feels in alleviating the pangs of a suffering fellow-mortal, an unfortunate who would have fallen into the utter slough of discouragement but for the helping hand outstretched by your kindness."

These effusions are the fruit of real feeling. They are in no single word suspect of that banal and factitious sensibility or the literary emotionalism so common in this age. No further proof of this need be sought than Julie's tone in respect of others of her familiars, not less deserving or devoted perhaps than the two men of whom we have spoken, but without their passport to her real heart. The Chevalier de Chastellux was one of her earliest as he was among her most attentive friends, and always, in her own words, "entirely kind and attentive." But, despite these claims and qualities, her feelings towards him are never more than grateful; on no occasion do they amount to sympathy. In a letter to Guibert she mentions his return from a long journey. "I shall be glad to see him, but if I could have added to his absence what I would

take from yours, many were the long days till we should meet again. Observe, I pray you, how I reverse the order of the days. I have loved the Chevalier for eight years!" The author of *La Félicité Publique* was, none the less, no guest to be despised, and the most critical sought his company. Chancellor d'Aguessau was his grandfather on the mother's side, and he was commonly said to have been "dandled on the knees" of this redoubtable ancestor, from whom he inherited his culture and precocious development. Having entered the Service at a tender age, De Chastellux was a colonel at twenty, and took part in most of the campaigns of the Seven Years' War. But, soldier of some name as he was, his heart inclined to literature, and his convictions to the Encyclopædia. On this high-road to success, he travelled fast and far. Some scraps of prose in the *Mercure*, a treatise on "The Union of Poetry and Music," and finally a mighty tome on politics and philosophy, constituted a claim that needed no seconding to make the Chevalier a man of fashion first, next a man to be observed, and finally, in his fortieth year, an Academician.

In some respects he deserved this rapid advancement. Affable and "candid," upright and reliable, his real knowledge and quick intelligence, joined to a particular gift for repartees and picturesque expression, justified his name as the most charming of conversationalists. His sayings were current in club and boudoir alike, as when he said, speaking of Diderot's style: "These phrases seem as though drunk, and set on pursuing each other."

A group of young women, discussing passion, are, he tells them, "like the idle readers of travellers' tales!" In more serious moments his views were often original, while "streaks of illumination" often flashed across his talk like lightning through a bank of cloud. But the mania for unmeasured and incessant puns marred his undoubted wit, and his dissertations too often suffered from obscurity of expression. "The wit and ideas of Monsieur de Chastellux," said Madame Necker, "are like the dim images which appear as though to one's eyes at the mention of any given name—a tree, mountain, or campanile."

Julie was too sensible to count these slight blemishes for sin to the Chevalier, but her annoyance with them is apparent from the way in which she speaks of his visits. "The Chevalier de Chastellux has determined to turn my head. Yesterday evening he again devoted himself to me. I was at the point of death when he arrived, and a corpse I remained for so long as he was here." His prejudices and fixed opinions, and the violence with which he was wont to lay down the law, on musical matters in particular, also offended her. His assault on her enthusiasms when he proclaims Gluck's masterpieces as "absurd and detestable," stirs her to mingled anger and pity at such obtuseness. "Why do I not discuss *Orpheus* with Monsieur de Chastellux? Because it would be barbarous to discuss colours with the Fifteen Score."[1] What is

[1] *Les Quinze Vingts* = Fifteen Score = 300 inmates of a hospital, founded in Paris in 1254 or 1260 by Saint Louis, for "300 blind men whose eyes the Saracens had bored out in the Holy Land." Since, a hospital for the needy poor.

more serious, and prevents Chastellux from obtaining the affection surely due to his devotion, is that Julie suspects him of affectation and artificiality. He lacks sensibility also; a defect which does not deny a kind heart, but disenables him, she says, from the capacity to understand the things of the soul and the joys of the heart. He is vain, and attaches too much importance to trifles "and the world's stupidities"; he professes a needless admiration "for Court, the Princes, their rising, retiring, and *vegetating*." Contact with him often fills her with a dumb irritation hardly to be contained. "For three-quarters of the whole time I cannot understand the Chevalier. He is so satisfied with what he has done, knows so well what he will do, and is so enamoured with reason! In a word, he is so perfect at all points, that I have a hundred times felt myself utterly mistaken when I have been speaking or writing to him. It has been on my tongue to pronounce or write *Chevalier Grandisson*, but that would imply no envy for *Clementina* or Miss Gléon.[1]

Such vexation, due to the intensely dissimilar natures of the couple, is, however, confined to outbreaks of this kind, discreet whispers in a friendly ear. Julie's conduct or attitude towards him never betray it, for if she is sometimes less than just she is never ungrateful. Chastellux's real qualities are clear to her, and, when occasion serves, she is zealous on his behalf. His dearest hope was

[1] *Miss Gleon.* Doubtless Géneviève Savaleye, Marquise de Gléon, an intimate friend of Chastellux.

obtained, thanks to her initiative and persevering championship. "He's very pleased with me," she tells Guibert in October 1774. "I warmed up his friends, and things have gone so well that the next vacancy will see him safe in the Academy. This is no doubt his due, but it has not been arranged without an effort. The keenness, joy, and desire with which he has pursued this triumph communicate themselves to me. Fontenelle is right—every age has its toys." "How proven it is," is Guibert's sententious reply, "that the last quality required in a member of The Forty is *soul*. But since the Chevalier has wit, knowledge, even some erudition, and has also written a most worthy *opus*, I consider it an excellent action to have assured his succession to the first vacancy. This toy will give him transports. He thinks it already in his hands." The death of Chateaubrun did, indeed, realise this hope a few months later. Next to Suard, and before La Harpe, Chastellux was among those to whom Julie's influence assured the sweets of what she ironically christened "immortality for life."

This review of the *salon* of Mademoiselle de Lespinasse has hitherto noticed men alone. But the new *salon* was ruled under a far less severe dispensation than that long since adopted by Madame Geoffrin, and the circle round Julie was no more confined to members of the opposite sex than were her private friends men alone. Young or old, fair or plain, some claim to wit was all the passport needed by the many women who passed her doors.

In her relations with the majority of these—rare exceptions like Madame Geoffrin and the Maréchale de Luxembourg always excepted—the hostess, one must however admit, exhibited less warmth than their masculine compeers. She does justice to their virtues, appreciates their attractions, and is sometimes stirred by their more tender attentions. But they do not possess her heart or receive her confidences. With them she is always clearly reserved and ready to doubt. A mere breath provokes a feeling of disquiet, the instinctive retreat which easily degenerates into distrust and jealousy. Some secret instinct, often observable in women with the capacity for great love, fears the rival in every sister with whom she comes in contact, no matter how exiguous her charms; an instinct that spoils all joy, and stands guard over every impulse towards intimacy.

Julie's relations with that Countess de Boufflers whom Madame du Deffand nicknamed *The Idol*—"because she was worshipped in the Temple, the home of her lover, the Prince de Conti"—were of this kind. She was one of the most attractive women of the day, and is not to be confused with her two contemporaries, the Duchesse de Boufflers, afterwards Duchesse de Luxembourg, and the Marquise de Boufflers, the friend of King Stanislas Leczinski. She was a charmingly pretty woman, with that frail beauty which is often called delicate, but lasts longer, and contemporaries record that, at almost forty, her complexion was as fresh as at twenty. Her quick tongue was really eloquent,

Often paradoxical, her conversation was always ingenious, original, and picturesque, and if her argument were sometimes daring, its expression was still so chaste and so loftily expressed that a hearer usually forgot the sad and frequent discrepancies between her words and her acts. She was honest, however, as witness her own saying: "I would render to virtue by my words what I wrest from her by my actions." No one thought the worse of her for this, which was merely in accord with the rule of the time. "What concern have we with the spring if its waters run clear?" demanded the Duc de Levis. "It would be just as reasonable to inquire whether the doctor who orders moderation has always practised it." More open to criticism were the somewhat subtle and calculated qualities of Madame de Boufflers' wit, her trick of emphasising words to which she desired to draw attention, and the pause which claimed admiration at the critical moment of more brilliant sallies. "She is for ever preoccupied with effect, and you might say that she is eternally posing before a biograph," jeers Horace Walpole.

Julie is aware of Madame de Boufflers' failings, and may well seem to insist too much upon them when we recall the latter's real claims upon her gratitude. Constant friend of Madame du Deffand as she was, Madame de Boufflers was one of the first to take the girl's part against the Marquise. She did not break off relations with the elder *salon*, but she was none the less one of the most frequent figures in Rue Saint Dominique. Her

reward, one must feel, was small, for, while Madame du Deffand never forgave the defection, Mademoiselle de Lespinasse was never rightly grateful. Yet Julie was not altogether insensible to Madame de Boufflers' friendship. "I'm truly pleased to find you here," she writes to her, when they have not met for some time. "I feel your absence on several accounts, taste, custom, and habit — the last the least, for habit is no more than our substitute for feeling in matters of lesser moment. Farewell! I'm extremely anxious to see you again, and you are mistaken if you imagine that I have been content with your absence." Julie, also, is not prone to shut her eyes to her friend's good qualities. "I have seen much of her during the past week, and she is truly amiable. She was quite charming at Madame Geoffrin's dinner on Wednesday. She never opened her mouth but we had a paradox, and her defence, when attacked, was so spirited that her unsoundness told as smartly as any truth." But irony follows fast on this eulogium. "She told us that even in the times when she liked England best, she would never have consented to fix her home in that country unless in company *with at least twenty-four or twenty-five intimate friends*, and sixty or eighty absolutely necessary other persons. This need of her soul was communicated to us with much seriousness, and still more sensibility." Julie scratches to sharper effect in this passage: "While I lay awake, my thoughts turned to Countess de Boufflers, and I wondered how it happens that all her graces and

attractions still leave her so ineffective a figure. She really does not make much impression, and I think that I know why. Everything has its conventional *truth*. There is the truth of a picture, of a play, of a sentiment, and of conversation. Madame de Boufflers reaches this truth in nothing, and this explains how she passes through life without really touching or interesting even those people whom she has been the most anxious to please."

Similar passages could be multiplied almost infinitely, and it is not very difficult to discover the cause of so much unkindness and sarcasm at the expense of a friend whose faithfulness was never open to question. Madame de Boufflers, forty-eight years old as she was, dared to flirt with Guibert, and Guibert had not seemed insensible. This is the unpardonable crime to a passionate woman, and not for all her devoted affection might it be forgiven to the Countess.

Julie was equally cold and angry with another celebrated friend, or if her displeasure is less acute in this quarter it is still less justifiable. The fame of Madame de Marchais has scarcely come down to us, and she is therefore the more deserving of a moment's attention. Her *salon*, according to Marmontel, "embraced all the most estimable persons of our day, and, in the domain of culture, all that is highest and most distinguished." The presiding spirit in this galaxy was a delicious little creature, four feet in height, but perfect in figure, and of ravishing proportions. Her features erred on the side of regularity, if at all. Her hair was

a marvel, and her eyes brimming over with fun. Her teeth "were much in evidence, but superb." She dressed eccentrically perhaps, with enormous bouquets on her head, and "all about her person more garlands of real flowers than are to be seen on the entire corps of the Opera." Madame de Marchais was, in short, a curious mixture of attraction and the ridiculous, but that her intelligence was extraordinary no one ever questioned. Alert, lively, quick, and pointed, "one might say that her very silence was full of animation," and she was as profound as she was ready. "She could guess one's thought, and her replies were arrows which never missed their mark." Yet, with all this, her nature was of the sweetest, and singularly obliging to others. This "young fairy," as Marmontel calls her, did not lack for admiration; but her heart owned a single master, Count d'Angiviller, Director-General of the Royal Buildings and Garden; and when, after fifteen years of affection, the couple found themselves free, and promptly married, only to be mutually more dear than before, this phenomenon obtained them the just admiration of all beholders.

For such a woman to forsake her home and the attentions of the throng, which was almost a court, around her, to claim an almost daily place in the small *salon* in the joiner's house, was certainly a mark of friendship which Julie had to acknowledge, and everything seems to show that she appreciated it at its worth in the beginning. But it chanced that this pleasant lady was never tired of admira-

tion. "She inspires a passion," sighs Walpole, "and has not the time to cure a quarter of the wounds that she inflicts." She was scarcely a flirt, and never touched gallantry; but to awaken the tenderness which is content with looks, vague hints, and discreet sighs was always pleasant to her, and from the day when Guibert first noticed her, still more from that on which she became the confidential critic of his first essays in the drama, Madame de Marchais was irremediably banned from Julie's good graces. It is interesting to see how promptly the latter's jealousy assaults a disquieting friendship, and the cleverness with which she at once delivers her attack on the most susceptible spot—the vanity of a young author. "We always love our admirers," she writes to Guibert. "But you should certainly tell Monsieur d'Angeviller to bid Madame de Marchais hold her tongue when she asserts that the two first acts of *The Constable* are pure Machiavelism, that the Constable is a detestable, and Adelaide a ridiculous, part, &c. Good-night. I wish to hold the exclusive secret of your self-esteem. In return, I yield you that of my heart." This little manœuvre was completely successful, for between Guibert and Madame de Marchais there was no further intellectual traffic. Their nascent sympathy was similarly suppressed. And if this astonishes any one, he is proved but little wise in knowledge of our humanity, and literary humanity in especial.

To conclude this gallery of the friends of Mademoiselle de Lespinasse, we may well outline the

portrait of a woman toward whom her feelings changed in an inverse gradation. Towards Emilie Félicité, Duchesse de Châtillon, Julie was at first utterly indifferent, but presently felt the most tender affection. This lady did not, indeed, enjoy the dangerous gifts of dominating beauty or dazzling spirit. Goodness of heart and an almost ingenious sincerity were her chief, if not her sole, charms, and she was thus singularly unlike her mother, the delectable Duchesse de la Vallière, the friend of Madame du Deffand, who was still notable for her beauty when she might well have been called old, and whose charms are celebrated in the famous quotation—

> "La Nature prudente et sage
> Force le temps à respecter
> Les charmes de ce beau visage,
> Qu'elle ne saurait répéter."

The Duchesse de Châtillon was little more than a child when, in this famous mother's *salon*, she first met Julie de Lespinasse, and at once conceived for her one of those girlish passions that amount to little less than adoration. Julie's breach with Madame du Deffand a few years later made practical demonstration of her feelings possible, and the young Duchesse found no care or attention too much for her friend. No devoted or loving sister could counsel or advise more devotedly. Her purse was ready at need, she missed no single opportunity for the finest and most delicate attentions, but the lapse of several years alone won her more reward than a rather chill and reserved gratitude.

Julie was not intentionally thus backward.

She was simply incapable of constraining her affections. She was even vexed with herself for the failure, but a natural human weakness merely turned this vexation against the innocent cause of it. "She is kindness herself, but she makes me cross with myself. She thinks that she loves me, and the thought prompts her actions. She is kind and honest, but her head is as hollow as a pumpkin, and her soul is a very desert. She is often in my way, and robs me of my own thoughts. Can I fill her head or people her desert?"

But Julie's rebel spirit was to suffer change. Suffering, the grand instructress, brought her to a more just appreciation of such faithful loving-kindness. The sweet consolation of an ever-ready love triumphed in days of sorrow and utter discouragement, and Julie welcomed an affection as delicate as it was ardent. "I should think poorly of myself indeed," she then writes, "if I did not love a person who gives so much and asks so little. If only you could see her, or hear the things she says to me. Such affection is own cousin to real love." Once the ice was broken, one might say that these two souls recognised their own passionate complements, and that they flew together. Julie, suffering in her turn from Guibert's cold response to her flame, cites the Duchesse as an example of true compatibility. "I begin to believe that the first of all the qualities which attract love is this capacity of giving love. You need not argue, for no imagination can conceive the thousand ways she finds by which to reach my heart. Friend . . . If you loved me so! . . . But,

no! I would not have it thus. Heaven keep me from twice knowing the joy of it!" This is no chance passage. Page upon page, in these days, express Julie's new feelings for an incomparable friend. They need not weary the reader's eyes, for those already quoted sound a key that needs no reiteration to convince us of the reality of a tie that, in the writer's own words, "is the charm and grand benefit" of her declining days.

CHAPTER VII

The foreign colony in Paris in the eighteenth century—Success of Mademoiselle de Lespinasse with these birds of passage—David Hume—Incredible public infatuation for this man—He haunts Julie's *salon*—She intervenes in the quarrel between Hume and J. J. Rousseau—She presides at the conference which dictates Hume's line of conduct—Consequent dissensions in the Encyclopædist camp—Epistolary war between d'Alembert, Rousseau, Walpole, Voltaire, and others—Generous conduct of Hume—Other foreign friends of Mademoiselle de Lespinasse: the Marquis Carracioli, Abbé Galiani, Lord Shelburne—Intimacy of Julie with the latter—She professes admiration for his statesmanship.

EUROPE'S discovery of Paris, and the discovery of Europe by Paris, are two statements of a fact the occurrence of which in the middle of the eighteenth century was of some importance, and had far-reaching effects. The close of the sixteenth century doubtless saw a certain foreign influx into Paris consequent upon the two Medicean marriages of the French throne, but this infiltration of alien elements was highly restricted, and really affected no more than the actual Court. French society under Louis XIV. remained almost purely indigenous, thanks partly to the country's continual struggles with three-quarters of the Powers, in part to the rooted French conceit that the realms of the Roi Soleil were, in the midst of Europe, as a land of light in the heart of a barbarian, very chaos. This lofty isolation outlasted its chief author's reign by some years, but in about the year 1750 the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle seems to sound a silent summons, and

Paris is forthwith a centre towards which streams an alien horde—Russians, Austrians, Poles, Danes, and Hungarians. Even more numerous than the visitors from all these nations was the English flood which burst upon Parisian society. These English were, for the most part, men of cultivation and breeding, used to the French social code and speaking the language fluently. Their consequent cordial and sympathetic reception led to renewed visits. The "Paris habit" was contracted. Some came to reside in the city: the city pleased all alike.

We cannot here study the influence of this peaceful invasion upon French manners or ideas, but something of it is clearly visible in the new tone exhaled by, one might almost say the rejuvenescence of, the *salons* and literary circles of France. Men and women alike, the Parisians exhibited keen interest in the mental habits, the point of view, the judgments, and the feelings of the distinguished guests who so enlarged the horizon of their vision. No supper, evening or social gathering was presently complete unless it were graced by some of these fashionable strangers. They were sought out and entertained as well as men may be. Madame Geoffrin set the fashion, and her home was for forty years as it were the central meeting-ground of Europe. Other hostesses followed more or less closely in her train, and Mademoiselle de Lespinasse was not the one to be last on such a road. Julie s supple and catholic intellect, and her knowledge of the languages and literature of England, Italy, and Spain, predestined her for the special

appreciation of foreign visitors, and one might indeed fill many pages with a mere list of those who thronged her apartment at various times. Some idea of her success in this intercourse can, however, be formed from a brief survey of such of them as really became her friends and left some mark upon her history.

The first of these, by date no less than from his own importance, was Hume, the famous Scotch philosopher, whose position as Secretary of Embassy caused him to reside in Paris from 1763 to 1766. His social success was tremendous. "Those who have never known the strange effects of fashion, can hardly picture my reception, by men and women, in all classes and by all ranks. The more I attempted to escape their excessive politeness, the more their attentions overwhelmed me." This is Hume's own testimony, but it might conceivably be more true to say that he made no undue attempts at escape, and surrendered at an early date. Anglomania was then at its height—a fact clearly to be seen, says Horace Walpole, by the triple rage of the public for "Clarissa Harlowe," whist, and Hume. It was impossible to attend Court, the Opera, a ball, or the Comedy, without seeing the big head of Lord Hertford's[1] improvised diplomatist "framed in two pretty faces." Champfort, asked for news of the "lion," replied, "I think he must be dead,

[1] Lord Hertford brought the historian to Paris as his secretary. Hume, however, was not officially "Secretary" except between the summer of 1765, when he became "Chargé d'Affaires," and the winter of the same year, when the Duke of Richmond was appointed to the post.

for I have only seen him three times to-day." Lord Marshall asserts that "a lady is in disgrace at Court for having asked who he is. . . . She must be some provincial, just arrived in Paris." "Hume," adds the same witness, "might apply the historic phrase to himself, and say, 'Not to know me is to confess yourself unknown!'"

The candid vanity of the historian's letters to Robertson proves that he was scarcely averse from this notoriety. "My food here is ambrosia; I breathe incense and tread flowers. Indeed, I never meet a person, a woman in particular, whose conscience would not accuse them of a serious lapse if the occasion should pass without a long and pompous compliment to myself." He is ingenuously pleased by a visit to Versailles, when the Dauphin's sons, the eldest scarcely eight years old, ran up and delivered a torrent of hyperbolical praise. The youngest, a child of five, forced himself to lisp "while all around applauded, a compliment got by heart and imperfectly remembered." One scarcely wonders if, after this, Hume proclaims Paris the most polite and enlightened city in creation, or considered, as he records, "whether I might not establish myself here for the remainder of my life."

The English, it is fair to confess, exhibited some astonishment at all his enthusiasm, and more than one compatriot smiled in his sleeve at adulation sufficient to turn the most solid and well-balanced brain. Hume's intimate friend, Lord Marshall, warns him against this danger. "I hope," he writes, "that these ladies fair and grand will not

spoil you so much that we shall get back a dandy, a dapper man at the embroidering. A flirt taught Hercules himself to spin!" Walpole's pen is dipped in keener gall. "Mr. Hume is the one thing created wherein the French have real faith. They are wise in this, for I defy living man to understand a word of his, be the language English or what you will. . . . Mr. Hume is *fashion* in the flesh, though his French be about as intelligible as his English." These unkind reflections enshrine a partial truth. Hume's outer man was far from brilliant. He spoke haltingly, heavily, and with embarrassment. He was coarsely, clumsily built, and his features were neither refined nor distinguished. His moral qualities were, however, on a very different plane. Of a lofty spirit, and gifted with a profound intellect, his judgments were sound, and his conversation and writings both bear witness to that capacity for real observation which joined in happy alliance the vision of the historian and the broad perceptions of the philosopher. He was no less correctly praised for his upright heart, a character at once strong and gentle, constancy in friendship and reliability in all intercourse. Adam Smith, one of his best friends, asserts that his habitual jests were simply the effervescence of a natural kindliness, and a gaiety tempered by delicacy and modesty. He was never unkind, even in the slightest degree . . . never let fall a jest intended to wound. His humour amused even those against whom it was directed." Everything in him, say others, testified to his honesty and loyalty. In the exemplary purity of his life

might have been read the presage of his serene death, worthy a sage of old Greece—a moment of which this is related. Being at the very point of dissolution, certain friends would have had Hume hope that he might still recover. His answer was this: "No! no! I go as fast as any enemy, if I have one, can wish, and as easily as my best friend may desire." Parisian opinion was perhaps more acute than that of London, and, moving at the instance of some vague feeling of his real superiority, have been as really justified in fact, as in expression it was frivolous and out of all proportion.

Julie de Lespinasse shared the contagion of the hour. She had met Hume in the *salon* of Saint Joseph's, where he made his first entry almost on the moment of reaching the city. "I pride myself," Madame du Deffand was afterwards to write, "on having been the first to pay him attention. This is the single ground on which I may claim to be deserving. . . . The charms and pleasures offered *elsewhere* have borne him away and relegated me to the rank of a mere acquaintance. You know if I am vexed, if I did not appreciate all his merits, am not touched by them, or would not gladly have been called a friend of his." The application of this "elsewhere" is plain. Madame de la Ferté Imbault says that Hume fell headlong into "the magician's power," solicited and was accorded the entry in Rue Saint Dominique, and seldom stirred "from that little chapel." Here he both met with the most flattering reception, and was not backward in testifying to his appreciation of it. But he was

shortly given to understand that his priestess and her satellites would brook no divided allegiance. No backsliding towards the neighbouring shrine could be tolerated, and every relapse evoked a smart call to order. "Yes, sir!" writes Julie, after one such act of misconduct, "I was one of the first to recognise your work. I am proud of it, and I sincerely desired to be your friend. I have flattered myself that we were friends, and I learn that this is not so with the deepest regret. . . . Whether or no custom licenses or tolerates the alliance of a friend with an enemy, I cannot tell. I do know the demands of friendship. More I should be sorry to know."

That Hume knew how to sue for pardon is plainly to be read between the lines of the coquettish note which soon afterwards sealed a reconciliation. "The source of your sighs, the charming Néolé (?), commands you in her infant treble to sup with me on the 11th of this month. I think that you will not dare to refuse, and so I leave to that day the expression of all my good and my bad thoughts of you. Ah! how long it is from now until then!" Or, do we need more proof, can anything be clearer than this plaint of Madame du Deffand, the abandoned, to her friend Horace Walpole? "I am truly pleased to think that you are unlikely to see him (Hume) again, and that I never shall. What has he done to me? He displeases me. Shall I, hater of idols, not detest their priests and worshippers?"

Hume's supersession at the Embassy by the

Duke of Richmond in the summer of 1766, and his consequent return across the Channel, might sunder, but in no way obscured, his friendships in Paris. Part of his correspondence with Julie has come down to us, and clearly proves her constant thought of him and her real grief at his departure. "I did promise not to write to you, but I feel that in this I promised more than I can observe, and I cannot resist the desire which is upon me. . . . Madame de Boufflers gives me hopes of your early return. I would that the moment could be hastened, and that I might then possess you without fear of a second loss." This occurs in the first letter of the series. Only a few months later Julie writes again. "You say nothing about your return. Is England, then, like Hell—a bourne whence none return?" A year later still sees the same eagerness: "I am such an individualist, and yearn so for another sight of you, that all my heart prays for your eternal disgrace." Such language might be open to the suspicion of mere hyperbole did not still later letters show Julie in the part of her absent friend's hot champion. Her action then, in delicate circumstances, proves the reality of her feeling better than any words could do. There's no need to enter into all the details of Hume's famous quarrel with Jean Jacques Rousseau, for the story is already only too well known. But Julie's share in the incident has been somewhat obscured, and a word on the subject will not be out of place.

At the time at which we have now arrived, Rousseau was passing through the most critical

period of his career. Severely handled by the Parliament of Paris, and condemned to personal detention on account of his latest works, *Emile* and *The Social Contract*, and similarly condemned, a short while after, by the Council of Geneva, which also burned his books by the hand of the common executioner—Rousseau was an outcast, wandering from town to town, and country to country, under various names and disguises, and not knowing where he might dare to seek refuge. Countess de Boufflers, his special patroness, now obtained him a safe-conduct under which he was able to return to Paris for the few weeks which she hoped would suffice for her to secure his pardon. He was lodged in the Temple by Prince de Conti, a man whom Hume was accustomed to visit. The couple, thus met, conceived the closest friendship—so close that Hume carried Rousseau back to England when he returned thither in 1766; obtained him the hospitality of his Derbyshire friend, Davenport, overwhelmed him with benefits, and finally left no stone unturned, even to the exhaustion of his personal credit, in a vain attempt to obtain a pension for him from the King. So moving a spectacle naturally had its effect on Encyclopædist circles in France. Every eye was moist, says Garat, at the thought of the English historian "bearing Jean Jacques in his arms" into the heart of that happy isle wherein, it was whispered, the essential precepts of *The Social Contract* were observed in fact. Hearts grew hot at the thought of this audacious innovator, this "savage," this "republican," finding

support from royal hands and pensions on the steps of a throne. "Hume and Jean Jacques could not longer be thought of in any other position than in each other's arms, bathed in tears of joy and mutual gratitude."

One need scarcely say that Julie's imagination did justice to the vision. Her passionate admiration for the genius displayed in Rousseau's work transferred itself to the man, when she met him once or twice during his brief sojourn in Paris, and not d'Alembert's caution nor Madame Geoffrin's good advice could moderate her fervour. Her first letter to Hume, after his departure, contains a curious proof of this. The Dauphin had just died, freely mourned as is every Prince who has not reigned. The Encyclopædia, in especial, lamented this untimely death as the end of all its hopes, although it is not easy to understand exactly why this should have been so. Moved by this illusory idea, Julie suggested an extraordinary scheme. Rousseau was to write a panegyric on the dead man; the heart of Louis XV. was to melt at this effusion, and the philosopher should thus be received back into grace. "I wish Monsieur le Dauphin to be praised as he deserved," she explains to Hume, "and I know no man in all France who is as able for this task as is Monsieur Rousseau. He, and only he, can instil into such an elegy the warmth and interest which will move sensitive minds, and of which our orators, our poets, and our philosophers, are incapable. Monsieur Rousseau may, perhaps, forget the fact, but he has especial reason to cherish the memory of

Monsieur le Dauphin, for it is known that only a few days before his demise this prince expressed great interest in Monsieur Rousseau, and his desire to dissociate himself entirely from the persecutions to which he has been subjected." So set was Julie upon her idea, that she even enclosed with her letter a species of draft, personally composed with the aid of d'Alembert, "to serve Rousseau as a nucleus for the fine things that he is going to say."[1] Hume is strictly enjoined to "warm" his friend to this task, and Julie concludes thus: "I consider that this elegy will facilitate Monsieur Rousseau's return to France, and his restoration to his friends and the nation which mourns his absence."

The composition of an elegy in honour of the most "churchy" prince of his day naturally did not appeal to the author of *The Social Contract*, and the project was still-born. Its failure seems to have in no way diminished the mutual good feelings of the trio, and relations were continued upon the old footing. In the following May, Julie received from London a copy of "the admirable portrait" which Hume had, at his own expense, commissioned from the engraver Ramsay. The three-sided honeymoon continued, and the public was even more impressed than before when, at one of Madame Necker's evening parties, d'Holbach read a letter from Hume which he had received on the previous evening. "My dear Baron, Jean Jacques is a rascal." The company was duly moved at this

[1] A transcript of this curious document will be found at the end of this chapter. See page 211.

pretty opening, and the sequel did not belie its suggestiveness. A letter from Rousseau to Hume followed: "You are a traitor, and brought me here only to ruin and dishonour me. . . ." "These two words, *traitor* and *rascal*," says a witness of the scene, "exploded in our party, and in a section of the capital that same night, like any two cannon-shots."

Violent as was its first surprise at this scene, the resultant disturbance in the philosophic world was little less acute. No one knew anything, but imagination was not to be gainsaid, and two angry camps were soon pitched the one against the other. Mademoiselle de Lespinasse's letter to Hume, written on the morning after the theatrical scene, gives some idea of this electrical atmosphere. "Good God, sir! but what has come to Rousseau and you? What exact deed of darkness has he committed against you?—for after your letter to the Baron there's nothing which one may not fear. . . . If I did not hesitate to seem importunate, I would ask for immediate details of your sufferings, not out of curiosity, for your word is enough for me, but—the simple truth!—in your own interest, so that I may have the means of defending you against these fanatical Rousseauites."

The eagerly awaited post arrived, but the news in it was not such as soothes excitement. In place of facts, denunciations and complaints were piled upon each other. D'Alembert did not exaggerate in the least when he wrote to Voltaire: "You would laugh to hear the reasons which justified Rousseau

in first suspecting, and next accusing, Monsieur Hume of a league with his enemies. Hume talked against him in his sleep. In London he lodged in the same house as Tronchin's [1] son. He had *his eye upon him.* And, last and most, he could not have been so kind to Rousseau without ulterior designs." The truth lay in these last words, as Rousseau himself testified a few years later, in his cynical and astonishing avowal to Madame d'Epinay: "Know once for all, Madame, that I am vicious and was so born, and that it is impossible for you to imagine how hard it is for me to act rightly, or how easily I do wrong. . . . You smile? To show you how entirely truthful I am, know that it is simply impossible for me not to hate a benefactor." Jean Jacques' annoyance was also partly due to the feeling that he was a complete failure in England. D'Alembert plainly says as much in this letter to Hume: "You have probably not given its due attention to a queer phrase in the letter of this *pretty little fellow*, as you once used to call him: that the '*public, at first much interested in him, soon began to neglect him.*' This is the real offence, and he visits it upon whomsoever he may. You undertook to exhibit the bear at a fairing. His booth, at first so popular, was presently unvisited, and the bear visits this neglect upon you."

Such were no doubt the inward reasons, to-day they would be called the psychological reasons, for the strange conduct of Jean Jacques; but foolish as he was, his secret irritation would probably not have

[1] Tronchin was a mortal enemy of Rousseau.

exploded with such violence but for an incident which disturbed his balance and rendered him scarcely responsible. That pitiless jester, Horace Walpole, being in Paris about this time, took it into his head to forge a letter, purporting to be from the hand of Frederick the Great, and addressed to Rousseau. Half serious in form, this missive overflowed with malicious and excessively mordant irony. Under the plea that he wished to show some consideration to Hume as an ally of Jean Jacques, the forger first confined the circulation of his work within a few Parisian *salons*. But the general desire to see this letter in Rousseau's hands soon induced him to forward it, and the victim was so effectually deluded that there was afterwards found among his papers a long and emphatic protest addressed to the King of Prussia, and complaining of what he calls "this cruel insult to misfortune." His fury and fierce thirst for vengeance, when he learned the truth, may be imagined. An unfortunate impulse of his mad brain fastened the guilt of it on that most improbable person, d'Alembert. Hume, he imagined, was d'Alembert's accomplice. The honest and ingenuous historian, called to meet this astonishing charge, was first utterly confounded and then as wrathfully indignant.

Hume would have been better advised, however just his anger, to disdain the maunderings of Rousseau and pass over so absurd a scene. Madame de Boufflers formally told him so, and it was also the first counsel of Julie and of d'Alembert, who stated it plainly in this joint letter: "Do think twice before

exhibiting your wrongs to the public eye, for quarrels of this kind often have no effect except to further excite an obstinate fanatic, while those who are indifferent use them to revile the literary world in general." D'Alembert wrote again, a few days later: "My advice to you is—Publish no single word against Rousseau, but wait for his attack. . . . Let him show himself the utter fool that he is, and worthy of Bedlam, and we need fear nothing. His one desire is to be notorious at all costs. Mademoiselle de Lespinasse thinks with me, and so do all with whom I have been able to discuss the subject." This good advice is only open to one criticism. It arrived too late. Hume's letter to d'Holbach, repeated and discussed in every Parisian set, produced an effect never dreamed of by its writer. "If the King of England had declared war on the King of France," he declares in his surprise, "conversation could not have seized upon it more universally." Jean Jacques' friends defended him by spreading reports as false as they were unkind, and many who knew nothing of the facts never hesitated to accept these perfidious statements. Thus the scandal grew until it seemed impossible to remain silent, and, on Hume's special request, a solemn conclave assembled in the *salon* of Rue Saint Dominique, after dinner on the 24th of July.

Turgot, Morellet, Marmontel, Saurin, Duclos, and d'Alembert thus met to deliberate under Julie's presidency. The debate, long and serious, as comported with the gravity of the occasion, ended at

last in a formal and unanimous resolution which d'Alembert was deputed to communicate to Hume forthwith. "We unanimously resolve that the whole story must be made public at once. I write *we*, for I speak in the name of us all." This preamble is followed by a plan of campaign—a detailed memorandum on the style in which the facts should be presented, and the tone to be adopted. "Everything" is to be set out "simply and directly, but without temper or the least acrimony. There must be no reflections upon Rousseau, or even upon his writings. . . . I am ready to repeat every word of this before Rousseau. I am not aware that I have any cause to complain of him or to praise him, but since you ask my advice, my friendship for you requires that I should bluntly tell you what I would myself do, were I in your present position." The letter concludes with these lines, dictated by Julie herself: "Mademoiselle de Lespinasse, to whom I have read the whole of your letter and of my reply, charges me to tell you how truly she loves you, and how she is assured that you must at once state your case in print."

Hume obeyed. Suard translating, and d'Alembert and Julie de Lespinasse acting publishers and distributors, a fat pamphlet, crammed with chapter and verse, called upon the public to judge a purely personal difference. The natural consequences were those which any one might have foreseen in such a case. Statement was opposed by statement, and envenomed, drawn out, and enlarged in scope, the quarrel soon set by the ears all the high priests

of the new propaganda. The plan of this biography does not allow its pages to be filled with these sorry details, but their effect upon its chief characters needs passing attention. And the spectacle that it offers is as instructive as the cause was puerile, for it needs only just such a folly to lay bare that secret mine of prides, jealousies, rancours, and petty spites, from which life sadly proves that neither the greatest mind nor the most philosophical soul is exempt.

Walpole's forged letter was the cause of the second quarrel, now superimposed upon its forerunner. D'Alembert was extremely annoyed by hearing that Rousseau believed him to have written it. "Gracious Heaven! my dear Jean Jacques," he cried ironically, "but is not this just a trifle too much! However a man may desire to respect your position and to abstain from sneering at you, he really must smile. I am the author of, at least a party to, Walpole's letter! You could not be more sure of this if you had seen the pen in my hand! And Hume and I have plotted your destruction! So much has at least never been a secret to me. I congratulate you on your excellent optician!" His letter to Voltaire breathes the like spirit. "Rousseau pretends that I am the author of the letter under the King of Prussia's name, which makes a mock of him. You will know that this letter is the work of a certain Monsieur Walpole, a complete stranger to me, and to whom I have never spoken. Jean Jacques is a wild beast, who should be viewed only through bars, and never touched except with the end of a pole."

Leaving Rousseau, d'Alembert's wrath was turned against Walpole, to whom he owes this absurd "pother." "There's a certain cruelty," he writes to Hume, "in tormenting an unfortunate who has never harmed you. . . . Rousseau is obviously a quack, but one can abstain from his drugs without stoning him. Monsieur Walpole must be eternally reproached with having made this poor creature lose his head, and with having outrageously compromised you—and me, even though I do not care a snap about the matter. I shall eternally laugh at quacks like Rousseau, and the cowards, like Monsieur Walpole, who dare not attack them openly." Finally, as was his habit, he finds, quite unjustly, that Madame du Deffand is the source of all the mischief, and denounces her to Hume as Walpole's inspiration. "The whisper here is that Madame du Deffand undoubtedly inspired this sorry trick. She is said to have revised the letter and furbished up the style. . . ." Hume is less certain of this, and d'Alembert, growing violent, commits the supreme indiscretion of dragging in the name of Mademoiselle de Lespinasse. "In respect of my neighbour, *The Scorpion* (for so I call her), I repeat that she is a jade who fawns on you to-day, never for friendship's sake, but solely out of hatred for Rousseau. You are the dupe of her shallow duplicity, but you may believe that she hates you because, in the first place, she hates all the world, and men of worth in particular, and next because she knows that you are the friend of those whom she holds in particular abomination—not but that these repay her

in kind, or rather return her hatred with the scorn which is its due. She is fortunate in having to deal with so honest a person as Mademoiselle de Lespinasse, a woman who permits neither herself nor her friends in any way to reciprocate the naughtiness of this woman, but, this forbearance notwithstanding, perpetually seeks her hurt *per fas aut nefas*. Yet Mademoiselle de Lespinasse alone saves this creature from a torrent of rhymes and epigrams which would make her as ridiculous as she is odious. Let us leave such refuse and return to Rousseau, even though he be of just the same kidney. . . ."

An affair of this kind always induces the last imprudence, and Hume was indiscreet enough to show this letter to Walpole. The latter was never the man to suffer an attack in patience, but his first attitude on this occasion was, none the less, one of disdainful aloofness. "I despise Rousseau utterly, and am perfectly indifferent to the opinion of Parisian *littérateurs* on the present subject." But his temper soon rose to sharp retort. "I really cannot imagine why I may not attack Rousseau, if he may attack every government and religion. D'Alembert may be annoyed at having my letter attributed to him. He is within his rights. Personally, I should be more than annoyed were his 'Elegies' and translations from Tacitus to be laid at my door. I am, however, prepared to pardon him anything, if he will only refrain from translating me." After this personal defence, he takes up his pen on behalf of Madame du Deffand. "This carrying one's hate of a blind old woman to the point of hating her

friends without reason, is a sad and miserable thing. D'Alembert's conduct has no justification. Madame du Deffand has no cause to love him, and I have only heard her name him three times, but never once did she utter a word against him. I remember that on the first of these occasions I mentioned that I had heard him called a good mimic, but could not call him a good writer. She replied, with much heat, that he was very good company indeed."

Aggressions of this kind continued, to the extreme joy of the gallery in general, and not least to that of Voltaire. "Is not this," he cries gaily, "something nearly as ridiculous as Jean Jacques himself? I find myself as deep in it as a man eating a supper to which he was not bidden. Our pretty coward complains that I have written a letter in which I ridicule him. Before heaven, I do ridicule him."

Justifiable as were laughter, sarcasm, and *tu quoques*, the better conduct was still that adopted by the two friends whose souls were above its meanness, so soon as the first outburst blew over. After one angry explosion, Hume promptly recovered his self-control—witness the eloquent and entirely spontaneous appeal which, only the next year, asked sympathy of his friends for the ungrateful Rousseau, and besought Turgot's influence on his behalf. This plea he seconded by every possible means, and if its ultimate success gained little gratitude from Jean Jacques, the worthy Scotchman at least won Julie's hearty approbation. "I have seen," she writes, "the letter which you wrote to Monsieur Turgot on behalf of that unfortunate

Rousseau. I could indeed recognise your true and humane goodness in its lines, and this last proof of those qualities overpasses all that has gone before. To me Rousseau seems proven imbecile, beyond a doubt, and this explanation makes it impossible to continue our surprise at his treatment of you." This epilogue to a mean tale may cover all that precedes it, and the biographical pen gladly closes with these generous words the history of an alliance originally no more than a daily social intimacy, but in the issue destined to prove an exemplar of noblest friendship.

From the sage, virtuous, and phlegmatic Scotchman Hume, to the light, noisy, braggart, and demonstrative Neapolitan Caraccioli, is a far cry. Both were intimates of Mademoiselle de Lespinasse in almost equal degree, but under this common appearance it is easy to perceive that each obtained from her something in especial, the counterpart to his own qualities. Hume gains her heart while his rival amuses her brain, and this difference finds expression in the terms of her farewell to the latter on the eve of his transfer from the Neapolitan Embassy at Paris, so long his home, to the Viceregal palace in Sicily—"a fair land," as he sighs, "but worthless as beside Place Vendôme." "The ambassador leaves this week," Julie writes to Condorcet, "and I shall miss him greatly. But his departure will be a lesson in the infinite difference between the pleasures which pass and those that interest or are felt. This will be no more than a negative privation." These lines are not to be

called warm, yet the Sicilian diplomat was a curious and really sympathetic figure—a man heavy in body and quick of brain, scholar and buffoon, now a facetious babbler, and next moment acutely original. He had made for himself a language half French and half Italian, always picturesque and peculiarly full of colour, and there was never a room but his fluent tongue, exuberant gestures, and resounding laugh were perfectly able to hold the entire company. "He had the wit of four men," says a contemporary, "gesticulated for eight, and made the noise of twenty."

Caraccioli's success at Paris was immediate, alike in society and in the *salons*. "You cannot imagine how fashionable he is here—a second edition of Monsieur Hume!" says Madame du Deffand, and she immediately adds, "I don't hear the three-quarters of what he is saying, but the loss can pass, for he says a great deal." Apart from occasional remarks of this kind, Madame du Deffand was at first considerably pleased with the ambassador. "This person is something talkative," she tells Walpole, "but he is good-natured, direct, and honest." . . . "I may confess," runs another passage, "that I find Caraccioli a sufficiently pleasant person. He is straight, kindly, and of a lofty nature. While wise, he is also a buffoon; a man of reason and character, and a comical fellow who can talk nonsense by the yard. He is, in fact, a mixture of all possible ingredients—except only bad ingredients." But this honey of Madame du Deffand is suddenly turned acid. "Your Carac-

cioli calls all the time, but my taste for his company does not improve. He has plenty to say, but there is no fruit for all the leaves. . . . There is no reason to object to him as an acquaintance, a person to meet or even to have in one's own house, but he's tiresome and a bore—a calf's brain in a monkey's head." Her sarcasm is not discomfited by the victim's illness: "I believe that he must shortly die. He's as full as an egg, and coughs like a fox—*Do* foxes cough?" The change, of course, has its explanation, and this Madame du Deffand provides in the single line of postscript: "His venerations are d'Alembert and the Lespinasse."

Julie's reservations in her judgment of the ambassador, noted above, must not be read as meaning that she was insensible to his admiration, or was not, at least, sensible of the value of her conquest. Her flattering sketch of him proves the exact contrary. "You will not easily find a more complete personality, by which I mean that the ambassador unites in his person all sorts of qualities, and all good in their kind. . . . His perceptions are fine, definite, and very just; his infectious gaiety communicates itself to all the company; he is a facile talker, and so amiable and kind that there is no need to inquire whether he has sensibility." This final phrase, let fall as it were by chance, is a revelation of the real Julie. "Hot-headed and impulsive, always thirsting for tenderness, any suspicion that another lacks feeling or is careless, robs her of her ease and chills her before she is well aware of it. Her secret heart nurtured such a suspicion

about Caraccioli, as it appears, until he left Paris, when proof by absence, that touchstone of the affections, revealed the ultimate seriousness behind the frivolous husk of his daily self. "He misses us from the bottom of his heart," she then writes, a trifle surprised. "His letter is quite sad, and overflows with friendliness. Tell the Duchesse d'Amville that our estimable ambassador hid larger sensibilities than he wished to own to."

Among the numerous foreigners who were constant visitors in Rue Saint Dominique, many left their mark upon the social or political history of the time. Count d'Aranda, Count de Creutz, and Baron de Gleichen were among them. Another, the Marquis de Mora, will presently claim a chapter to himself. The gallery in which these names have place might be almost indefinitely studied, but room can here be found for only two pre-eminent personalities. The first of these is Abbé Galiani, "the little thing" and the spoilt boy of Madame Geoffrin, worthy compatriot of Marquis Caraccioli, and, if we may so put it, a miniature edition of that large man. If the Abbé's boast be true, he was used daringly to "ramble" at his ease, and to perorate freely, in the severe atmosphere of Rue Saint Honoré, under the very eye of the old mistress of the apartment, who was indulgent to his lapses alone; and within reach of the momentarily unlifted arm of Burigny, that mistress's lord-high-executioner. It is easy to imagine the audacity of his paradox, and the extravagance of his buffoonery, in that other *salon* so lightly ruled by Mademoiselle de Lespinasse. There he

might tell any tale if only it were couched in respectable language, and his most futile antic was sure of indulgence. He, indeed, conceitedly relates the story of "this ever-to-be-remembered supper at which I was so pleasing by virtue of my sheer ogreishness, establishing for fact that I loved only the money of my friends in one kind, and the beds of my friends in the other. . . . Mademoiselle de Lespinasse allowed that I was perhaps sane in this, and the entire Court of the Philosophical Parliament decided that a gay ogre is of more worth than a sentimental bore."

The lively Neapolitan confesses that nowhere did he feel himself more free, better appreciated, or more "at home," than in the "crimson *salon*" of Rue Saint Dominique. Professional jester he may be, but the Abbé has a catch in his voice, hide it as he will, on the day when he must bid farewell, and with no hope of return, to the delightful circle—"the joy of my life" during his days in France. "I could not muster the courage to bid you farewell. So here is my good-bye, and do not forget me, for to a sensitive spirit that is no easy hour which for ever separates us from our friends and those whom we love, and honour, and esteem." To his exile in Naples he reconciles himself "as the fiends to Hell," and for many years he continually requires news of his incomparable friend. "What does Mademoiselle de Lespinasse? Her dog? How's her parrot, and is he always blaspheming? She can see how I remember all that touches her!" Perhaps these constant sighs may sometimes win him a thought

from her, "for she is polite, true, has a happy memory, and reads much, and I was once a book which she read without wearying."

Notwithstanding their irremediable separation, Julie certainly did not forget the Abbé whose antics and sallies had more than once lightened her bad hours. She kept still more green the memory of a man of whom this same Galiani wrote with airy disdain: "He is that rare creature, an amiable Englishman, and has been a Secretary of State in London, quite a common thing." This "amiable Englishman" was William Petty, Count Shelburne, afterwards Marquis of Lansdowne, the leader of the Opposition since Pitt retired from Parliament. During a visit to Paris in the summer and autumn of 1774, he was powerfully attracted to Julie. The attraction proved mutual, and the pair met almost daily, whether during intimate calls or at social gatherings in which, their feelings being known to all, the company contrived to throw them together. "He leaves in a week, and I am heartily glad of it," cries Julie, worn out, "for he is the reason of my having dined daily with a party of fifteen. . . . I want rest, for my works are run down."

This complaint need not be taken too literally, but we may rather believe this deliberate judgment on Lord Shelburne: "I have seen much of him, and I have listened to him. He has spirit, fire, and a high tone. He reminds me somewhat of the two men whom I have loved,[1] and for whom I would live or die." Her enthusiasm is such "that she shares

[1] Count Guibert and the Marquis de Mora.

it with all the world," writes Morellet, and that with those "energetic expressions" of which she has the habit whenever her heart is moved. Writing to Lord Shelburne himself, Morellet touches nicely enough on the origin of this sympathy. "I should tell you, if only to drop your conceit a point, that your chief attraction for her is the quality with which her friends always reproach her—ardent and insatiable activity, a fire and vehemence of the affections which devour and consume. These things she found in you, and so she loves her own faults in you. We others, cold and wise people, call this horrible and fatal, but it is futile to suppose that either of you are capable of reformation. Therefore, as gluttons bidden to the feast of him whose ruin provides their meat, we devour all and make good cheer, saying, 'This man runs fast to ruin, and his table shall not long be spread thus.'"

Rapid intimacy between the pair was doubtless the fruit of such a similarity in character, but Julie took a particular interest in Shelburne's political capacity. Her curiosity was almost passionately aroused by this minister of yesterday and again-to-be minister to-morrow—the *leader* of a great party in a free state; the generous politician whose care was for the general good rather than his own pleasures and personal advantage. "Do you know," she writes to a friend, "how he rests his head and his soul after the fatigues of a government?—by deeds of well-doing worthy a sovereign; by creating opportunities for the free education of his tenantry; by personally entering into the smallest details of their instruction and

welfare! This is how a man of thirty-four finds relaxation, a man whose soul is as sensitive as it is strong. . . . What a distance between such an one and a Frenchman, our pretty gentlemen at Court!" From this contrast between men, she unhesitatingly passes to the contrasted conditions under which men live in the two countries. "Certainly, President de Montesquieu knew what he said in—*The Government makes the man.* In this country, a man with any energy, high standards, or genius, is like the caged lion in a menagerie. He feels his power as a torture; he is like a Patagonian compelled to walk on his knees!"

These reflections on Lord Shelburne show us Julie in quite a new light, for such language reveals a class of women rare enough at this time—the woman with "a citizen's soul," loving liberty, anhungered for reforms, carrying into public life the same impetuous heat, perhaps also the same chimerical illusions, which are her habit in the matters of private life. Those who are interested in Mademoiselle de Lespinasse may do worse than devote a moment to this side of her character.

NOTE TO PAGE 194.

Portrait of the Dauphin by Mademoiselle de Lespinasse.

This document was enclosed with Mademoiselle de Lespinasse's letter of February 23rd, 1766, to David Hume, and is printed in the volume "Letters of Eminent Persons addressed to David Hume":

"1. Monsieur le Dauphin's earlier studies did not bear such fruit as might have been expected from his disposition and prodigious memory. After his first marriage, he recommenced his studies with the greatest assiduity, and devoured every conceivable work in *belles*

lettres. Horace and Virgil he preferred among the poets; but Cicero and Boileau he knew by heart. Horace he loved. His liking for Homer led him to commence the study of the Greek language, but he did not pursue this for any distance. It was from it, however, that he contracted a taste for the English language—a tongue in which he was sufficiently proficient at the time of his decease to be able to read Pope's translations from Homer. His lack of Greek scholarship was his lasting regret. He was perfected in the Latin tongue, and was at one time able to write it well. He was well grounded in Spanish, and slightly in Italian. Of German he had no more than a smattering, but he began this study, and only abandoned it, I believe, when he found himself out of sympathy with those German authors on whose works he commenced.

"2. I never heard Monsieur le Dauphin speak of the modern philosophers, but I know that he was aware of the writings of many of these, and that he esteemed them. He had little sympathy for the moral doctrines imputed to them, but being a complete man of the world he never entirely credited all that he heard on this score. His spirit certainly inclined to philosophy at all times. During his illness, he made a constant study of 'Locke on the Human Understanding,' and his choice of books was an index to the condition of his health at this time. Thus he turned from Locke to *belles lettres* as his health declined, and returned to Locke as it improved. I am not aware whether or no he read Bolingbroke, Sidney, &c., but I believe that he did. I am certain that he read 'L'Esprit des Lois,' pen in hand, and that he was generally conversant with all the chief works upon Legislation, Public Rights, Politics, and so forth.

"3. I have no certain knowledge of his political leanings, for he was signally reserved despite his geniality. His respect for the law was extended to the persons of the magistracy—such of its members, at least, as kept within their station and were faithful ensuers of their functions. I can believe that he would have stood fast for authority, but that he would have wielded his own authority with a gentle hand. Kindness, ease, and gaiety were distinguishing traits of his spirit and intellect. His death bears sufficient witness to the fact of his courage.

"4. He was profoundly, sincerely, and convincedly religious. He had studied the subject from all sides, not excluding those of its relative power for good and harm upon the masses. He left an exhaustive monograph upon this subject, but Madame la Dauphine keeps this private. His gentle religion fell severely on none but himself, for the narrowness of bigotry was unknown to him. Thus all the world went astray in its opinion of him—the priests believed that he was for them, when religion was his single care; the philosophers believed him a fanatic, when he would never have restrained any man in his opinions, if only they were kept within the bounds of wisdom, and would still

less have become a persecutor. His character and principles were both the reverse of these ideas. He praised Saint Louis for his resistance to the Pope's attempts to encroach upon his royal authority, and certainly no priest would ever have encroached upon his own. He was addicted to no petty religious observances. Never, in all his long illness, was he guilty of a mean temper. His religion was on the grand model, to himself all, to the world simplicity and strength ;—a strength indeed and a joyousness known to few ; a kindness and a sweetness of disposition which nothing could alter. This simplicity, this force, and this noble resignation, have made men say that he died a philosopher. Certainly none ever died more bravely."

CHAPTER VIII

Mademoiselle de Lespinasse and politics—Curious mixture of utopianism and pessimism—Her feeling for Turgot—Julie's ideas and tastes in music and literature—Her intimate life—Her horror of all change—Relations with her family—Regular correspondence with Abel de Vichy—She plays the mother to her brother—Her wise advice to him—Her sad confidences to him in respect of her poverty—Growing discouragement of her last years.

MADEMOISELLE DE LESPINASSE certainly did not acquire her taste for politics from Madame du Deffand or Madame Geoffrin, for the former professed an ironical indifference to their claims, while the latter held herself almost fearfully aloof. Julie, on the contrary, was always intensely interested in the higher problems of government, which she studied with evident satisfaction to herself, but always rather from the theoretical than the practical standpoint. In common with the majority of her contemporaries, the idea to her is more important than the thing, while she can never resist the appeal of a formula or the magic of a phrase. In so far as her letters give a clue to her real ideas, her ideal seems more or less that which served to guide the earlier theorists of the Revolution, fifteen years after her death; liberty in all its forms, republicanism in fact, but under a monarchical system, which should make every public office electoral, and give a voice to all degrees.

Her positive ideas may have been vague; her

antipathies were extremely definite. Absolutism evokes her constant disapproval, scorn, denunciation even. "How can one live under this government, and not despair?" is a phrase repeated under a thousand variants, and this hatred of despotism is not confined to her own country. It ignores race or frontier, and, in the case of certain neighbouring countries, inspires judgments of really singular harshness and virulence. Russia is a particular object of her rage. Catherine the Great's careful attentions to the Encyclopædia and the leading French philosophers may blind Diderot, Voltaire, Grimm, d'Alembert even. They are powerless to move the wrath of Mademoiselle de Lespinasse. "What will you see there?" she asks Guibert, on the eve of his departure for Saint Petersburg. "All that a man should flee, and of which his life should be able to escape the knowledge. You will see the things detested of your soul, slavery and tyranny, servility and insolence. You will, I know, be able to say—This is as it is with us only too often. But our vices are weakened by our very defects; in that country, excessive misfortune alone tempers excessive corruption and baseness."

Julie's mingled envy and admiration for the English Constitution is a natural result of this temper, and she proclaims her approval in terms which might be open to the charge of most unpatriotic bias, did not her ardent nature often lead her pen thus far in advance of her thought. "For myself, feeble and unfortunate creature that I am, had I to live again I would rather be born the

humblest member of the House of Commons than even King of Prussia. Indeed, to gain the glories of Voltaire alone, would I consent to be reborn to any heritage but that of an Englishwoman." Wherever she compares England and France, and this is at all points, the verdict is always for the former country, and towards the end of her life, she seems to have fallen into the toils of that spirit of partisanship and bitter pessimism which times of trouble so easily invest with all the appearance of prophetic instinct. Thus when, on the day of Louis's XV's death, Morellet met and communicated this news to "a carriage-full of friends" returning from Auteuil, Mademoiselle de Lespinasse leaned out of the window and interrupted the general exchange of congratulations with a tragic—"My dear Abbé, far worse is yet to come!" Morellet remarks, "We considered that she was very pessimistic then, but afterwards, in the midst of the Revolution, those who had witnessed this incident were prone to invest her words with prophetic significance."

Even when the supreme direction of affairs was placed in philosophical hands by the inclusion in the Ministry of Turgot and Malesherbes—the first, her "friend of seventeen years," and the latter more newly, but little less intimately so—the event, which should seemingly have crowned her hopes, cannot at first scatter her doubts or dissipate her mournful previsions. "There is so much news, excitement, and rejoicing," she writes to Guibert, "that one knows not to whom to listen. I would fain feel happy, but that seems impossible." Two days later

she writes again: "Rejoicings are general, but there is this difference between my temper and the spirit of all around me: they are in transports of joy over their new hopes; I can only continue to breathe the misfortunes from which we are newly delivered." "If he cannot bring good to pass," she writes of Turgot, yet a little later, "we shall not be Big John as heretofore, but a thousand times more unhappy by reason of the hope which is taken from us." These extracts give an idea of the progressive alteration in her temper, a progress in despite of herself, we may almost say. Slowly and very gradually, the honesty of the new ministers and their evident good intentions lead her to feel that they may be able to carry out the most pressing reforms. Turgot she can now call "an excellent man. If he can keep his place, he will be the nation's idol. He is possessed by a desire for the public good, and he lavishes himself to that end." Her chief hope lies in the union of the two friends, now fellows in office, and when Guibert doubts, "You would have all the trouble in the world to put two wills into their two heads," she replies, "They have one will and one only—to do the best that is possible. Assuredly I love them, though the right word would be even stronger, and I respect them from the bottom of my heart. . . . Truly," she adds a little later, "that which *is* is beyond the best which might have been hoped, and was impossible to forecast."

So unforeseen a change from darkness to hope in the mind of Mademoiselle de Lespinasse is,

perhaps, to be read in conjunction with a remembrance of the very special attitude of these ministers towards herself. She undoubtedly enjoyed much influence with them, and it may well have been a factor in dissipating her fears. "We are to be governed by philosophers," sneered Madame du Deffand, "and I certainly regret my failure to secure their protection. The one road to that now lies through Mademoiselle de Lespinasse. Am I to take it?" Their elevation to power certainly did not relax the earlier ties between the two statesmen and their intelligent friend, and they willingly and most courteously defer to her opinion. Turgot continues to spend long hours in her company, discussing his projects, asking her advice, and listening to her criticism with that "completeness" and simplicity which he used when, she says, "he submitted his efforts at versification" in an earlier day. Malesherbes follows suit, and gladly consecrates part of his leisure to her. She is positive, and we need not disbelieve her, that such flattering attentions do not turn her head. "I do not stand by Monsieur Turgot from motives of gratitude. I should not forget his great worth did he ignore my existence. . . . I could tell you much of Monsieur de Malesherbes," she writes elsewhere, "but that might sound as it would not be meant. After all, it is not easy to perish of vanity when one is dying of sadness."

Julie's faith is always of gossamer, and her illusions do not endure. The ministry is no sooner confronted with its first difficulties than she returns

to her earlier doubts and fears, and forthwith resumes her mantle of Cassandra. "Our friend," she writes, during the troubled days of "The War of the Flours," "remained calm during the storm, and lost neither his courage nor good sense. He worked day and night. I, owning neither his courage nor his virtues, confess myself full of grief and fears. My fears wear the guise of beliefs, and I cannot contemplate the future without terror. . . . Can anything humble one more than to see ill for sole issue of the efforts of a king who desires the good, and a minister to whom it is a passion? Caraccioli talks sense: We are, for the most part, plain scum."

Mademoiselle de Lespinasse's general political creed can be deduced from all this with fair accuracy. She is by conviction an idealist, a sceptic where facts are concerned. If curiosity would lead us to picture her attitude, had she survived until the Revolution, we may see her as a second Madame Roland at its beginning—wildly excited, in transports of feverish hope; presently, one of the first to be disillusioned. Her disgust and revulsion would have been the more acute by the measure of her first excitement, natural results both of a mind always unevenly poised—a mind, in her own phrase, "like a thermometer gone wrong," leaping up from the poles "to the burning zone of the Equator," only again to plunge back to the pole, at no time able to mark "the mean."

Political speculations command Julie's lively interest, but they never move her heart. She

can neither really belong nor unreservedly yield herself to anything which does not appeal directly to her sensibilities, which does not stir her feelings or thrill her inmost being. This is the especial appeal of music. She always loved it "in the midst of my youthful dissipations," and the sweet hours of her happiest period; but she confessed that never could it so charm, so appear in its true value, as in the dark days when she has drained the bitter cup to its lees. "Incurable pain seeks only that which can soothe, and of such healers all Nature has shown me but three." First of these, she names the presence of the man whom she loves; next opium, "refuge of despair"; finally, "the charmer of my woes is music. Music bestows upon my blood, and all which moves me, such sweetness, and a sensibility so delicious, that I might almost say that regrets and every ill are turned to delight by its magic." Her delight in melody teaches her the words with which to describe it, as when she writes thus of *Orpheus:* "I wept, but tears had no bitterness; my pains were delight. . . . Music, charming and divine art, was surely the invention of a man called to console the unfortunate!" Or, again of the same opera: "My feelings were so acute, so moved; they so rent and so absorbed me, that words are incapable of expressing my sensations. I felt all the troubles and the joys of passion, until my one need was to withdraw myself; and those who did not share my feeling may well have found me stupid. This music was so allied to my soul and disposition that I shut myself up at

home in order to continue my enjoyment of the sensations which it evoked. . . . These voices joined charm to pain; their notes, as it were alive and moving, haunted me."

Julie's tastes are easily to be read in these quotations, which leave little doubt as to her preference between the rival schools then suing for public favour. Yet she neither decries nor proscribes the music that pleases but does not move, and speaks rather to the brain than the soul. "Exaggerate I may, I never ignore," she writes in her *Apologie*,[1] and this is a true verdict. In music, as in all else, she can appreciate the most diverse and apparently incompatible schools, and it is in this spirit that she writes after hearing a composition by Grétry. "I admired his talent, for never was music more spirited, delicate, or full of the most refined taste. It is as the talk of a witty, daring, and elegant conversationalist, who will always attract and never weary." Later, praising the author of *La Fausse Magie*, she takes occasion to define the limits of her admiration: "Friend Grétry must confine himself to the sweet, agreeable, sensible, and spiritual—surely enough! A little man whose proportions are good will find it both dangerous and ridiculous to climb upon stilts." His pleasant talent must not for a moment be compared with the marvellous genius of Glück, nor these pleasant melodies with those "sublime" numbers which overcome her, carry her away, make her "as it were crazed." . . .

[1] *Apologie d'Une Pauvre Personne*, &c.

"How compare what merely pleases with that which fills the soul, wit with passion, or a lively and animated pleasure with the sweet melancholy by which sorrow almost becomes joy?"

Literature stands to be judged in a like spirit and fashion. She has neither bias nor prejudice, and does not entrench herself behind the walls of any clique, but her preferences are not the less definite. Her "Apologia" embodies a brief review of her favourite authors and works, and this draws very precise distinctions between the values which she places upon each. The Maxims of La Rochefoucauld are approved for their "severity," and Montaigne's Essays for their charming "unconventionality." La Fontaine's Fables are *naïve* and simple. But she reads Racine's pathetic tragedies with a species of "passion," and stands almost alone in her age in her enthusiastic "transports" over certain of Shakespeare's plays. Voltaire's wit she judges amusing, while the multiplicity of his gifts astonishes. The idylls of "sweetly peaceful" Gessner soothe; there is a delicate flavour in Marivaux' "fine subtleties" and "appetising affectations"; but she is almost terrified before the "inflammatory eloquence" of Jean Jacques Rousseau, and "Clarissa Harlowe" brings her "to her knees." Among the other English writers whose work her knowledge of that language enables her to study, Sterne gains special approval for his discreet sensibility and restrained emotion. Morellet considers her pre-eminently responsible for the popularity of the "Sentimental Journey" in France. She certainly

amused herself, on one occasion, by forging two additional chapters to this work and reading them to Madame Geoffrin and her circle "as unpublished." Their plagiarism was so skilful and the composition so clever that all hearers were completely deceived, adjudged them better than the rest, and "far better translations."

The mental outlook of Julie de Lespinasse was little less complex than was her conduct. I have dealt at length with her opinions and her preferences, but some such study in detail seemed necessary to a proper understanding of her intellectual point of view—in modern phrase, "her complicated mentality." She is eclectic in the sense of her own expression—"a voracity for affection," which means that she is predisposed to welcome anything that induces a new sensation. But she really cares for nothing which does not stir her deeper feelings; which, be it for a moment only, lifts her "out of herself," and sets the blood to coursing more hotly, more rapidly through her veins. It may therefore be said that there is but one real passion behind all her varied tastes, and that, multifarious as are the expressions of her moral "portrait," its physiognomy still presents an harmonious unity.

In the setting which has now been traced, and among the friends whom we have seen as her companions, the heroine of this biography passed many quiet years, each day of them resembling the last, and all filled with the most lofty distractions. We can follow the disposition

of those days with the greatest minuteness. Julie seldom stirred abroad before two o'clock, but spent her morning hours in reading and writing, unless, as often happened, she received the visits of special friends anxious to enjoy her uninterrupted company. At two she dined, a brief and simple meal habitually shared with d'Alembert, except on Mondays and Wednesdays, when both were among the regular company round Madame Geoffrin's table. The afternoon was devoted to drives or visits; sometimes to a walk through a museum, or the exhibitions which were becoming fashionable about this time. Six always sees her at home, and her *salon* never empties before nine at the earliest. Here, the conversation is frequently interrupted by readings, as when La Harpe strains his throat to declaim a new tragedy, or Marmontel lets fall one of his *Contes Moraux*, of laboured simplicity and chilly impropriety. More serious works are also read here—historical fragments or portions of a scientific memoir. Madame du Deffand caustically paints Caraccioli's astonishment at one such scene. "He was drunk with all the lovely things that he had heard read. Condorcet had lauded one Fontaine; Monsieur de Chabanon deigned to translate Theocritus, and I can't tell you who had not contributed both tales and fables. And all these were more splendid than anything of the kind ever before heard of."

Except for a few brief summer visits to the country, she pursued this round from year's end to

year's end, and it soon became matter for a quite serious effort if Mademoiselle de Lespinasse was to break with her monotonous habits for even a week. At first, she possibly felt some yearning for an earlier and more simple way of life. "All the world is in the country," she cries one day, "and soon I mean to give myself some air with all that world." But such yearnings, if yearnings they were, soon passed, and she yielded to a species of carelessness and horror of physical effort which made the idea of any change or journey intolerable. To have to spend twenty-four hours away from home calls for loud complaints, and she is feverishly anxious to be back in Rue Saint Dominique. "Here am I in the country with my secretary (d'Alembert), who salutes you; and, really, I might have been the world round, so disagreeable do I find the change. We arrived in execrable weather, in a carriage that would not shut properly, in wind and in rain." All this pother is the result of a two days' visit to Monsieur d'Héricourt, at the Château du Boulai, near Fontainebleau. "I'd as lief die," she writes of another similar occasion, "but they say that we owe certain things to our social duty. I find duties of this kind very stupid at times." The high-roads she will not face, and, notwithstanding a hundred invitations, she never once, after coming to Paris, renewed acquaintance with the province in which she had once passed so many years, or the places where her nearest relatives still dwelt. Yet she was by no means devoid of family feeling, and a judgment

based on such appearances would do her a distinct wrong. Neither her false position before the world, nor the machinations with which she rightly or wrongly reproaches certain persons, nor all her new ties, ever effaced her earlier affection for the comrades of her youth—for some of them, at all events, and for Abel de Vichy in particular. She corresponded regularly with this young brother until her last days, and these touching letters exhibit her character in a light hitherto unknown to the world's eye.

The permanence of Julie's affection for Abel is the more remarkable since their ways lay so far apart. Abel's early entry into the army, and his service as bearer of the colours in the Gendarmes du Berri, seldom allowed him to see his sister; and when he had married Mademoiselle de Saint Georges in 1766, a young provincial, "pretty, tall, amiable, with a fine figure, extremely well brought-up," and of good family but little or no fortune, he was less than ever in a position to pay frequent visits to the metropolis. Julie, indeed, did not see her sister-in-law until two years after the marriage. We find her asking the young husband whether he has "the good fortune and good taste to be in love with your wife? Is she lively, gay? What is her character? In a word, dear friend, draw me her portrait, since I cannot see her; teach me to know her, and you will give me real pleasure. I do not mean her physical but her moral portrait, for this is what really matters to your happiness, and no one is more interested in that than myself—after

your wife, of course!" This tone of simple affection pervades the entire correspondence. Julie does not here choose words or parade sentiments. Every line in her letters breathes the liveliest interest in all Abel's affairs, and she takes care to give him all the news about herself, even to such details as the welfare of her little dog Sophilette, and the parrot—"a terrible talker of nonsense."

But the chief interest of these letters is the way in which they shed a hitherto undreamed-of light upon the character of her whom men variously called the *Sappho* of her age, and the *Muse of the Encyclopædia*. Every page is filled with the most judicious and virtuous counsel—circumspect, prudent, and wise sisterly advice to a young brother, doubtless "a good boy," yet inclined to the hot and wayward conduct natural to his age. To read these letters, a trifle "preachy," but true models of worldly wisdom, is to find a most unexpected Julie—mistress of her home, careful housekeeper, even a trifle niggardly; a woman as prudent, practical, and sage where her brother is concerned as she is passionate, headstrong, rash, and impulsive in all that touches herself. Thus, when Abel, lately married, proposes to leave the army in order better to consecrate himself to his adored wife and the care of his estate, Julie is a very copy-book counsellor. "You cannot examine yourself too carefully lest you one day regret this renunciation of what the world holds a most promising avenue of advancement. But this is by no means all. You are in duty bound to foresee a day when passion

shall have cooled. Will idleness please you then?—for no one can suppose that the care of his acres is sufficient occupation for an active mind. Just now it may seem sufficient, for your mind is absorbed in an active passion. I do not doubt that ample confidence and true friendship will follow. But, yet again, a time will come, and with it a void, and your military duties would fill that void. . . . I wished to say all that my tender affection for you has taught me to see. I desire your happiness above all else, and therefore I cannot wish you lightly to take a step which will and must influence every day of life that remains to you."

Advice thus reiterated won the usual reward of its kind. Abel can hear no voice but that of his own desire, and his decision to send in his papers gives Julie one more opportunity. He is determined, and therefore she neither regrets nor reproaches, but she does give practical advice as to how he may best conduct the affair so as to avoid unpleasant criticism. "He had better," she writes to his mother, "send in his resignation by means of the briefest possible letter to the Duc de Choiseul. He should not spare the expression of his regrets, and he must be perfectly open. The same post should carry a simple intimation of the act to Madame du Deffand, and another to the Abbé de Champrond. Thus, he should escape many comments which cannot but gall his feelings." Mademoiselle de Lespinasse also impressed upon Abel the necessity of nursing the susceptibilities of the redoubtable Marquise—surely a most disinterested

action on her part. "Why have you not told the Marquise that you contemplated this step? It would have been dealing more properly by her, —and pardon me if I remark that a man should always be careful in little matters of this sort." Duty satisfied, she turns to the most charming exhortations to enjoy to the full, and without a regret, the peaceable, obscure, and responsible path which he has chosen. "You have counted the cost, and there is no more to say. But you must expect that this country will not spare its strictures, for its standard of judgment is almost wholly wedded to vanity, its idea of pleasure is to stand well with the world, and its watchword, 'Appearances are the man.' And this world of ours is right, for it lives a thousand miles beyond knowledge of what domestic happiness means, or the idea that a fortune may yield double pleasure when spent for the good of our estates, and in ensuring the welfare of those who depend upon us. We have refined upon refinement until there is no pleasure in heaven or earth of which we are ignorant except simplicity and a natural existence. Do not, then, be vexed; still less, trouble yourself. But these men of sense must needs rejoice after their own kind. The kind preferred by you is only to be praised, for your purposed life was made to content and satisfy a sensible and virtuous mind."

From the day of Abel's choice, Julie concerns herself with his family life. The health and education of his children are her constant interest, but she would fain see them increase in number. "I

wish you would not be content with two babes. You should have six, for you could make them so happy!" These "babes" are hardly out of bibs and tuckers before she must find them a suitable teacher, and faithful d'Alembert is drawn into the quest. In short, Julie's grand preoccupation is her brother's life in its most minute details, and her joy when the young couple arrive in Paris, in the autumn of 1770, is easily understood. Abel de Vichy's journal, and Julie's letters of the time, show that there was hardly a day of this visit on which brother and sister did not meet in the tenderest and closest intercourse. Now, and only now, she breaks with old habit, for these dear country-cousins must be shown the town, and no matter what the discomfort to her own poor health, Julie guides them through a whirl of expeditions, visits, suppers, and constant theatre-parties.

The novelty of this, however, soon wore down, and a few weeks after their arrival saw Julie endeavouring to temper all this dissipation with a little seriousness. Her success was far from complete, but the attempt must serve for key to the understanding of the following lines, in which she lightly accuses Abel of doing his best to disgust his wife with Paris and its ways. "I should be glad to know her safe at Montceaux, recuperating after all her fatigues—I cannot call them pleasures, for you have piled them up until she must loathe the name! I am terribly afraid that she will hate Paris after the way you have hustled her about. That would be a pity. If I did not know your open ways, I should suspect

you of acting like those mothers who wish to drive their daughters into a nunnery, and yet to have nothing with which to reproach themselves. So they take the girls about, allow them all sorts of dissipations, jewelry, and the play, until the poor things are utterly disgusted, and fly a world which, they are assured, is no sort of place for them. . . . I trust that Madame de Vichy will, therefore, refuse to judge Paris by what she has seen of it, for I swear that if life here were what she has found it, I should verily hold Carmelite vows a far less rigorous tribulation."

There is no need to multiply quotations of this kind. Those that have been set out show Julie clearly enough in her novel part of guide and instructress—one might almost say, of the mother of a family. Counsel and remonstrance do not, however, fill all her letters to Abel. She does not make him the partaker in her troubles of the heart, as may be well supposed, but she discusses other intimate details freely, her health, the servants, and her limited means. She usually preserves a haughty stoicism on this last cause of anxiety, but when she does speak of it to her brother and a few other relatives, she confesses to grave fears for the future and considerable present embarrassment. A letter to Abel de Vichy, on the day when he settled at Montceaux, contains this plaintive passage: "I am sure that you are never so happy as when at Montceaux, for there you first learned the joys of ownership, and I hear that they are very real joys, although it seems that I shall die without tasting them. Big

estates I should not care for, but I confess that I begin to weary of my poverty, which will become a real misfortune when I am a little older. But sufficient unto the day is the evil, etc.!" She returns to the theme a few years later, the occasion being certain new taxes which bear heavily upon her slender purse: "You need only take away my friends to see me the victim of all earthly ills,—poverty, poor health, and trouble of the mind. Yet I think that few would have carried this burden better than I have done, for I seldom complain, though life is indeed a burden at times. But the passage of the years does frighten me, since our wants increase with age, while Abbé Terray has already carried off 400 livres of my income. This is a mean wail, but to have one's necessaries curtailed like this is to have occasion to feel."

The last letter of the series preserved for our eyes touches a note yet more lamentable. Here, and only here in all this long correspondence, Julie's spirit is touched with gall, or her feelings are strained. "I asked you certain questions which you have ignored," she complains to her brother. "If this was an oversight, it is one easily understood; if it has come about by design, I must say that your prudence has been carried too far. I certainly do not wish to force or even excite a confidence; I am not curious, and I can restrain my zeal. Therefore, believe that any mark of your friendship will always gratify me, but that I shall never complain when you may fail me in this regard. Those who have suffered like me, and who have known life only to be dis-

gusted and disillusioned, are people with whom intercourse is easy. They expect little, and they resent nothing." So novel a strain for her pen, such complaint for a light cause, and such bitter discouragement, surely point to a change in Julie's temper. She has, indeed, arrived at a period when all that has hitherto formed her especial pleasures or pursuits —the fame of her *salon*, the friendship of brilliant men, and the high distractions of art and literature, even the very pains of friendship—are to seem vain things and savourless. The story of Mademoiselle de Lespinasse becomes, henceforth, the story of her passion, its strifes and struggles. All her faculties, a strain to one goal, are absorbed and concentrated on that which she may not enjoy in peace, but which denies her the ability to enjoy anything else.

CHAPTER IX

Love in the latter half of the eighteenth century—Revolutionary influence on feminine ideas of the works of J. J. Rousseau and Richardson—Mademoiselle de Lespinasse is the most illustrious victim of the romantic infection—The Fuentès family—Birth and education of the Marquis de Mora—His marriage—His father-in-law, Count d'Aranda—Death of the Marquise de Mora—The Marquis comes to Paris—Reputation of the family—His personal success in the literary and social *salons*—First meeting with Julie—His instant attraction for her—He leaves Paris directly afterwards—His triumphant reception in Madrid society—His essays in literature—Relations with the Duchesse de Huescar—Sudden death of Mora's son—He returns to Paris.

Our subject has thus far been Julie de Lespinasse—the exquisite and original creature who exercised so potent a charm on all with whom she came in contact; Julie—the incomparable charmer and perfect entertainer, the warm and devoted friend, the discreet counsellor, whose every word was wisdom and the voice of very reason. I have tried to picture her thus—as she appeared to the most of those who knew her, and many quotations from the mouths of these her friends prove that my portrait has not been imaginative. Having more knowledge than the majority of her contemporaries, or even her friends, the name of this woman brings before us a personality really known to few in her day, suspected perhaps by others, apparent, as they supposed, to two or three at most, but probably comprehended by not one, to the end. For this woman was of the world's great lovers—exalted, torn, consumed; burnt by the passion which ob-

sessed her to unreason; tortured by jealousy, anguish, and remorse; whose rent and bleeding soul was made manifest, when thirty years were gone over her grave, by the publication of the famous letters which contain, as has been said, "the loudest heart-beats" in all the eighteenth century. By these pages, so terribly sincere, Julie de Lespinasse lives, as she will continue to live, in the minds of men; her long pain is made her posthumous glory. She is, indeed, the final type of a class rare at all times, particularly rare in the epoch which saw her live.

And here let it be agreed that the common opinion—that the age of powder and patches was incapable of more than the scandalous parody and profanation of love—does not run in these pages. Before condemning an entire century, it is surely well to realise that it contained two eras of which the latter redeems the former—in part, at least. The Regency, and the years which followed on it, pursued pleasure, butterfly caprice, and the quick satisfaction of sense or vanity; the second half of the century saw a moral and intellectual revolution in which avowed gallantry and cynical libertinage gave place to a very different propaganda. Chastity and constancy obtain the honour lately paid to their reverse; "attachments" replace "fancies," and, even as these are the issue of free choice, they are often, as it were, a second marriage, and one held in the more honour, since marriage in that day was seldom other than a compact, made without choice or inclination. Morality in the strict

sense is not bettered, perhaps; but few will care to deny that the dignity of life is a gainer, or that this very irregularity masks a rise in the estimation of virtue. So, at least, recalling her youth, adjudges a woman[1] whose notorious honesty permits her to be indulgent. "Good God! how unjustly the age is judged! How generous, well nurtured, and delicate was that distinguished society! How solid its ties! What faith to sworn faith, even in the least moral of relations!"

The tone of the day in regard to these almost public connections is one of gentle friendship, emotional, confiding; of a sensibility easily moved to tears and tinged with melancholy. The accent of passion seldom speaks; there is no ecstasy nor no despair. This is no ground for wonder. Love in delirium is, like a high fever, rare—a matter, we may suppose, that does call for regret. But a sentiment is not the less real because it is not hysterical. It is very clear that a transformation did occur during the forty years immediately preceding the Revolution, and this undeniable advance was largely due to the pens of two famous writers, Richardson and Jean Jacques Rousseau. The real power of literature needs no clearer testimony than this of the influence exercised upon women of the time by volumes of which the mere titles are unknown to so many of their sisters of to-day. In street and boudoir a long shiver seemed to pierce woman's torpid egoism. She rose up as at the break of morning, and the agents of this change

[1] *La Vie de la Princesse de Poix*, par la Vicomtesse de Noailles.

were *La Nouvelle Héloïse, Clarissa Harlowe, Sir Charles Grandison.* Eyes thus opened were aware of an obscure suffering and a moral void; that joy was dead, and existence vain without an ideal. Salvation cried for those joys of the heart and the sentimental life, and the fount of tears was quickened in the deeps of long-dry souls. The re-arisen fires shone brighter for the darkness past, and love was seen as a god new-born, beneficent, twice adorable, who was so long forgot.

In many women the change was certainly more apparent than real; their conformity was a fashion, a pose, an elegance of some kind, rather than a vital metamorphosis. Yet some were surely reached by this new grace, which moved yet others to the depths. Mademoiselle de Lespinasse was of these last—their chief, in fact. Her temperament was naturally ardent, exaggerated, and headlong, and she was no sooner aware of the ocean of passion than she plunged into it, and could never again master her soul. Love for love's sake was her creed when she found it, and the man was distinctly second to the emotion which forthwith became the focus and the end of existence. "Read in the deeps of my heart," she cries in perfect good faith, "and place therein yet more and better trust than in my words. Can words ever express feeling, that which moves us and whereby we draw breath—this greater necessity, aye! more than very air, for of life I have no need, while love I must!" And, from amidst such fierce effusions, rises ever as a refrain the remembrance of those who have kindled the flame that

devours—Jean Jacques, who "holds me so that I am afraid," and Richardson, whose romance she never reads but the story of Clarissa Harlowe seems somehow to become her own. "You will think me mad," she writes to an intimate, "but read one of Clarissa's letters, a page of Jean Jacques, and confess if you have not heard my very voice. I do not mean that I speak with their tongue, but we be dwellers in one land. My soul responds to every beat of Clarissa's dolorous heart."

This romantic obsession has clear dangers to an inflammable mind. Certain disillusionment can alone reward one who moulds herself on such a type of the superhuman ideal, the impossible; who would bring within the domain of real life the exaggerated sentiments of fiction. Those who fly high must needs risk falls that can only end in broken wings and sore bruises, and this was Julie's last end and the secret of her pains. Of these pains she is, beyond cavil, chief author and artificer; and the greatest crime of him whom she will call "murderer" and "executioner," and yet love to the end, is that he was merely a man when he should be a hero of romance. Yet her mistake has its explanation and excuse. Before the grand mistake, chance sent her one assuredly made in such rare image as might well encourage the vain dream, and give form to the visions of her fevered brain.

The Marquis de Mora, without being at all points the "perfect lover" or "celestial creature," visions of whom were to haunt Julie to the grave, was at least the victim of circumstances that in-

vested him with all appearances of such a phenomenon. Absence, sickness, and untimely death perpetuated his desirability, and crowned him with the aureole of her dreams. He was certainly the cause of her first incursion into the realms of great love.

The personality of the Marquis de Mora has hitherto been very indefinite, but certain new papers,[1] communicated to me, make possible a fairly clear reconstruction of the man as he was; and since he undoubtedly dominates the whole sentimental side of Julie's life, it seems only fitting that this portrait should be given in full. He it is on whom she calls in secret, though now she burn for another; faithless to those earlier vows so freely lavished upon him, he is the god behind the altar before which she bows in secret remorse. This dual sentiment presents a curious mental problem, the inwardness of which may reveal itself more clearly if we inquire into the strange history of the mutual allegiance of these strange characters.

The Aragonese branch of the Pignatelli family —another was domiciled at Naples—is one of the oldest and most famous in Spain. Its most notable figure in the eighteenth century, Don Joaquin Atanasio, sixteenth Count of Fuentès, was a trusted servant of His Most Catholic Majesty. Tall and wizened, and "handsomely ugly," this grandee had nothing of the aloofness and chill gravity then

[1] *Retratos de Antano* (Madrid, 1895. Privately printed for the Duchesse de Villa Hermosa.) Also, *El Marquès de Mora* (ibid. 1903), both by P. Coloma.

attributed to all his nation. He is, indeed, remarked as possessing the Italian rather than the Spanish temperament—a gay and lively person, gracious, willing to please; a servant of the ladies, and one who flitted ever here and there, "never seen to take a seat or stand in one place." In diplomatic affairs, however, he was a serious man, somewhat stiff as became his grave duties, and as impenetrable a keeper of political secrets as he was socially expansive in a *salon*. Doña Maria Luiza Gonzaga y Caracciolo, Duchesse de Solferino, his wife, was credited with more brains than education. She was affable but a trifle futile, a passionate gambler, and ensuer of high social pleasures—one, in short, born to grace a court, were not her poor health a continual obstacle often compelling her to lead the quiet life for a whole season's round. Her first child, Maria Luisa Gonzaga, entered the monastery of the Salésiennes in 1762; the second, Don José y Gonzaga, born at Saragossa on April 19, 1744, received the traditional name of his house's eldest son, as Marquis de Mora.

Commonly called Pepe in the family, this son passed his earlier years in the family palace on the Corso of Saragossa, with his younger brother Luis Pignatelli and a sister Maria Manuela. This sister married the Duc de Villa Hermosa, and both she and her brother will presently reappear in these pages. In 1754, Mora being then in his tenth year, Ferdinand VI appointed his father ambassador to the Court of Turin, and here the lad was entrusted to the tutorship of Abbé de la Garanne.

The Abbé was a Frenchman and taught in that language, which readily explains Mora's future bilingual facility. To the same source must be traced his early profession of certain ideas more in honour on the banks of the Seine than on those of the Ebro or Mançanares.

At precisely twelve years of age the lad married, and was gazetted to a commission in the Spanish army; and though either event was of nominal rather than immediate significance, his future was none the less affected. The girl with whom his destinies were thus summarily united bore the name of Maria Ignacia del Pilar, and was a daughter of Count d'Aranda, then Spanish ambassador at Lisbon, and head of a family between which and his own a great lawsuit had long been at issue. Thanks to her brother's recent death, this child of eleven was sole heir to a splendid fortune, while her immediate dowry was the Duchy of Almazan. The idea of terminating their feud by this marriage was no sooner mooted between the families concerned than it was put into effect, and on the morrow of December 4, 1756, Mora awoke to find himself possessor of a wife who still dandled her doll.

The three years following this fateful day Mora passed under the care of his stepmother and his tutor, at the Hôtel d'Aranda in Saragossa—his father was still at Turin—but the close of the year 1759 brought a second ceremony of marriage. The Fuentès family returned from Turin and the Arandas from Portugal; there were pomps and

rejoicings, and on April 6, 1760, "all the nobility of the kingdom" graced the religious service which sealed its earlier counterpart. All united to praise "the splendid boy"; few found a word to applaud the girl wife, with her skin "dark enough to frighten any man, and a mouth prematurely emptied of teeth." Horace Walpole's letter of the following June attests these last criticisms: "They say that she is not plain, and that her dentition is as good as may be expected of two teeth—and black uns at that." Surely neither keen eye nor boding spirit was required to prophesy the end of such an alliance.

Madame de Mora counts little in her husband's story, but her family redressed the balance, for Count d'Aranda's influence potently affected the Marquis's character, and indeed turned his mind in the direction which he afterwards pursued more than willingly. This Count d'Aranda, singularly unlike the majority of his conservative countrymen, dared to turn his eyes beyond the Pyrenees, and to open his ears to the new doctrines there current. For years almost the sole representative of this new evangel at the Court of Castile, his subsequent accession to power presented him in the rare guise of a theorist who practises his own doctrines. He was, however, a man of more will than wit, and his dull and frequently obscure tongue was a sad disappointment to Paris when he carried his high renown thither. His fair neighbour at a dinner given in his honour at Versailles complains loudly: "Not only did he fail to make a single witty remark, but he was

as dull and ordinary as can be! I think, however, that he is a trifle deaf, and unaware of it." Caraccioli compared him to a deep well with a narrow mouth. His sound sense and lofty character were in direct contrast to his superficial failure. The Duc de Lévis found him "dignified without arrogance, and weighty without being slow. He could be impenetrable without being mysterious." His strength of character amounted to obstinacy, and Charles III called him "an Aragonese mule," but he kept his counsel as may few. Thus, so secretly were his plans laid for the famous expulsion of the Jesuits, his most notable ministerial act, that every one of their communities was closed at the same hour on the same day, yet never a man in the kingdom had heard word of what was to be. His dry answer to the question, "How could you act with such secrecy?" "By holding my tongue!" is characteristic of the man.

That the Encyclopædia welcomed so puissant a recruit with open arms is a fact which needs no chronicle. Voltaire led the dance with his accustomed spirit. "You are aware," he writes to Madame du Deffand, "that a matter of thirty cooks have been baking certain patties during these last few years in Europe. A taste has grown up for them even in Spain, where Count d'Aranda and his friends partake freely." Galiani records how the master's enthusiasm was handed on: "The good old man is now pure Spanish—all for Aranda. Of course, all France follows suit, and the concert of applause is unanimous." The Count is a hero who shall cleanse "the

new Augean stables"; a victorious abaser "of fanatics and superstition"; the brave liberator who has "chased the Jesuits out of Spain, and so shall chase plenty more such vermin." That Mora, whose essentially French education had increased his natural ardour for everything new, and who breathed in all this at the family hearth, immediately found himself at home in the *salon* of Rue Saint Dominique, when he presently visited Paris, need not, therefore, astonish us.

Count de Fuentès had no sooner married his son than he was appointed Spanish ambassador at London, whither the young couple accompanied him. The Marquise de Mora's child, a daughter, born here during the following year, died within a few months—a victim of the climate, it was said. Whether for this reason, or that he was not *persona grata* at St. James's, the Count applied for his recall, and returned to Madrid with his family in January 1762. Here Mora experienced his first passion, falling a victim to the charms of the celebrated actress Mariquita Ladvenant, a lady whose talent, beauty, and adventures were at this time diverting the Castilians as much as her pious and repentant end edified them at a later date. The young man made so little attempt to conceal this attachment that the lady's titular protector, the Duc de Villa Hermosa, conceived himself outraged, and the consequent quarrel created such scandal that the families of Aranda and Fuentès considered it necessary to intervene. They therefore secured him a colonelcy and packed him off to his new command

in the Galician regiment then quartered at Saragossa. His father was, at the same time, appointed ambassador at Paris.

Luis Gonzaga, Mora's son, was born on August 25, 1764, and the bells were still ringing in honour of the event when, almost without warning, and making little more noise in her dying than she had in life, the Marquise passed quietly away. She was little mourned, and forgotten as quickly. Countess d'Aranda took charge of the child, and Mora, obtaining leave, proceeded forthwith to join his father in Paris. Widower and father at the age of twenty, neither event seemingly made any real impression on his character, and the wits of Madrid were quick to apply to him the popular song—

"I saw her at Mass on Sunday,
Sent her a message o' Monday,
Wedded her safe on the Tuesday,
Gave her a drubbing, Wednesday;
She lay abed on Thursday;
Houselled she was on Friday;
Saturday saw her where dead she lay,
And buried and done with on Sunday:—
Sure, but than I is none cleverer,
In one week boy, married, and widower!"

Mora reached the Spanish Embassy in Paris, then the old Hôtel Soyecourt in Rue de l'Université, at the close of October, and was quartered with the two secretaries, Fernando Magallon and the Duc de Villa Hermosa—the latter his sometime rival for the graces of Mariquita Ladvenant. The trio were quickly close friends, and his comrades soon introduced the young Marquis to their numerous Parisian acquaint-

ance. Magallon's name is now known thanks only to the letters of his friend and admirer, Abbé Galiani. He was a man of some parts but no high character, and an assiduous frequenter of Encyclopædist circles. "Don Juan Pablo," Duc de Villa Hermosa, was a more serious personage, whose wealth and birth enabled him to figure no less freely in Paris than in Madrid. He prided himself on a knowledge of French literature, and Voltaire recommended his translation of a work by Balthasar Gracian to the Academy, whose plaudits he duly received.

These comrades were of social service to Mora, but he would have been welcomed by Parisian society in any case, thanks to his family's position, for since the conclusion of the Family Compact,[1] the Spanish ambassador had been in great honour at Court. Louis XV, indeed, invariably placed a suite at the disposal of Count de Fuentès, in whatever palace he might be; and while other diplomatists must await the Tuesday audiences for a hearing, he need only appear and all doors swung wide open. A familiar friend of the Royal Family, the Queen and her daughters were wont to make daily requisition from his cook of certain delectable Spanish dishes, while his failure to appear one night at the Royal supper caused Louis to send a messenger to inquire into the cause of his absence, and to "lecture the Count" soundly next morning for the anxiety that he had caused. "It would be difficult to describe Fuentès' position in Paris," the Duc de

[1] Concluded in 1761, to guarantee the possessions of all Bourbon powers.

Villa Hermosa writes in his journal. "The Queen asserts that his departure cannot be thought of, as she intends always to keep him near her person. The King cannot do without him. He can please himself in everything, for, do what he will, no one ever raises an objection." His charm as a man won him the favour of every lady at Court, and the Encyclopædia found the ambassador "one of the most enlightened men of his day and of his country."

Countess de Fuentès cleverly supported her husband's popularity, for although she was already a victim of the disease which was presently to kill her, she bore its pangs with the extraordinary species of heroism that the love of pleasure teaches some women. But love "bigwigs" as she might, she was able enough to welcome men of letters, and her credit was increased by the general belief that she was the first who recognised the intellect and prophesied the brilliant future of the nameless, friendless, and moneyless Rivarol,[1] when he came to seek his fortune in Paris. Taking him under her protection, and singing his praises on all sides, she soon launched on the *salons* the young man whose matchless conversation was presently, and for long years, to be one of their chiefest attractions.

Mora could scarcely have found a readier welcome than as the son of this couple, and he was shortly quite a fashion in that paradoxical and contradictory world where laxest morality went hand in hand with the loftiest ideas, the seriousness of which

[1] Antoine, Count de Rivarol, 1753–1801.

was only to be equalled by the frivolous expression given to them, while their factitious brilliance was the admiration of a world. Versailles first, then Paris, were full of his name, although it is only fair to record that—witness the many notes still possessed by his family—the young man's earlier triumphs were distinctly such as accorded with his youth. If the world had conspired to heal this precocious widower's wounds, devoted consolers could not have arisen in greater numbers. They were not repulsed, and Mora's conduct for a time was such as to give grounds for the idea that he would be contented with such perishable laurels. But if his blood was hot, his temper was also high. He dreamed great dreams, and satiety came hotfoot with fierce disgust in its train. Thenceforward he might be young in years, but his tastes were serious, and literary gatherings, philosophical debates, and the study of the great problems already agitating men's minds, claimed him, despite the world and its lures.

A note thanking Condorcet for the loan of a manuscript at about this time points this change: "You speak with such unhappy truth on the fate of humanity, that it would be difficult to overpraise either the work or the man that so labours on behalf of the oppressed. But the eyes of the foes of truth are keen, and it must be kept from their view. You may count on my absolute discretion in this. If the world might share my hatred of tyrants and persecutors, such secrecy would be enedless, and we should all enjoy the inestimabel

benefits of freedom. But man is not made for freedom. His foolishness and his follies bind him under the yoke of slavery." Such language is strange at two-and-twenty, and hardly that of a coxcomb of the boudoirs; and we need not wonder that philosophical circles were quick to watch a young stranger who, speaking their own tongue perfectly, argued with warm yet restrained eloquence; was enthusiastic, yet did not forget the sense of proportion; and had all the assurance of conviction, but knew how to temper it with modesty.

Contemporaries paint Mora's portrait for us in some such colours as these, and—a matter of far higher interest to us—it was in this sort that he appeared to Julie on the day of their first chance meeting. Moving as both did in the same circles, the encounter was bound to occur, and the only astonishment possible in the matter is due to its late occurrence, for it is not until December 1766, that Julie writes to d'Holbach: "I want to tell you about something which fills my thoughts just now—a new acquaintance who possesses my brain, and I would add, my heart, if you did not deny me that organ." Her portrait of the young Spaniard demonstrates the deep impression that he made upon her from the first. "His face, full of kindly sympathy, imposes confidence and friendship. His character is gentle and attractive without being weak. He is an enthusiast, yet self-contained; well-balanced, yet full of qualities and intuition. And, his heart! . . . His every motion expresses

the innate virtue to which his discourse bears witness, and of which his acts are the ensample." And so she continues in this strain, vaunting now the modest self-suppression, now the naturalness, loyalty, and sincerity of him who seems to have conquered her at first sight. "One can always see to the bottom of his soul, and he always thinks highly enough of those he loves, or loves them well enough, to consider that any artificiality would be as much beneath them as it would be beneath himself. In a word, I find in this man my idea of perfection."

This is surely the Julie of a romantic imagination, nourished on dreams and visions, whose ideal —impossible hero!—has suddenly become concrete in human form, and whose supreme beauty knows neither fault nor blemish. This is the secret master of her hopes from girlhood upward. He has forced her head in a moment, and, fight as she will, her heart surrenders fast. "Ah! If you could know how this true soul calls to mine!" Yet, thus far, she refuses to acknowledge defeat. Young passion covers itself in the accustomed veil. "I would not stop here if he were not a man, for do not imagine that my liking goes near to love."

Mademoiselle de Lespinasse probably believes that this protestation is justified, for if an experienced woman shall often hardly distinguish between warm friendship and the first flame of the consuming fire, how much darker is the problem for a passionate and inexperienced creature whose most unequivocal sentiments so often soar on wings of rhapsody? Julie was probably not long deceived, even though

the time in which she could sift her feelings was short indeed. The letter quoted above is dated December 29, 1766; within the fortnight Mora's face was turned towards home.

Mora left Paris thanks to a vulgar family quarrel. His relatives combined to press upon him the necessity of remarriage, and they were the more insistent because a distant cousin, Félicité d'Egmont Pignatelli—a beauty, rich, and of the highest birth—was at this time prepared to take a husband. The young man, however, declined to hear reason, finding his new liberty too precious to be hampered by any bond, however golden. He met every argument with this plea, and there is no reason to doubt its reality, or to suppose that it covered any thought of Julie. But his obstinate resistance provoked violent family scenes, and, nowise sorry to have the genuine excuse that his leave had expired, Mora hastened back to Madrid, where an "enthusiastic reception" awaited his return.

Castilian society was curiously unsettled at this time. Spaniards had begun to travel, and to intermarry with the French aristocracy. Their authors were also translating the most notable works of the new philosophy, and the combination of these influences had awakened them to the new ideas. The mere hall-mark of Parisian origin now became the signal for strange enthusiasm, and certain authors, Diderot, Jean Jacques Rosseau, and Voltaire were lauded to the skies by men who had never looked between the covers of one of their works. A "pilgrimage" to Ferney conferred a patent of the

highest intellect. Men whose sole pursuits had been hunting, dancing, the gambling-tables, or *corridas*, suddenly found themselves qualified to revise the national morals or laws, declared themselves humanitarians and enemies to superstition, and convinced champions of the "diffusion of the new gospel." "Toleration" was all the fashion; "free-thought" was "the last thing." Much of all this was plainly superficial—the shallowest veneer, which never touched the radical obstinacy and conservatism of the nation. But, such as it was, the movement was afoot, and Mora, an eloquent and clever young man, newly returned from a "furious success in Encyclopædist *salons*," became the inevitable focus of its enthusiasms.

Mora's compatriots, indeed, convinced that here was *the* man who should renew the faded glories of Castile, fell upon him as "the miracle of his country," "the greatest of all Spain's great." Abbé Galiani has recorded the strength of this idea in a letter written when, but a few years later, the untimely death of the young Marquis had allowed men to read the measure of these hopes in the violence of the regrets that followed their fall. "Destiny rules all our affairs, and Spain was worthy of but one Monsieur de Mora. Perhaps this fact will influence the whole order of the fall of our monarchies." And, again: "There are lives on which hang the destinies of Empires. Our eyes now behold a false appearance of light, but Spain will not be as France for Mora were not now dead had the eternal order so planned it." Such enthusiasm seems strange to-day, or we

lack its most elementary justification, for of all Mora's vast correspondence, or his rare manuscripts, a few personal letters have alone been preserved. Yet, that he excited it remains clear, and where every contemporary proclaims it—Italians and Frenchmen no less than Spaniards—posterity must needs believe that the object of so much praise was certainly a man of some work.

Madrid rejoiced in Mora, but the Marquis felt less pleasure in Madrid. He was vaguely troubled, and a few notes of the period confess to the "melancholy" and "invincible sadness" that haunt him since his return from Paris, and as a relief to which he turned to the pursuit of letters. These works do not seem to have been unduly heavy judging from their titles—more we do not know of them—a rhymed elegy on the late decease of Mariquita Ladvenant, and certain heroi-comic verses on a friend's love affair. This latter, Abbé Casalbon, was a strange figure. An unfrocked Jesuit, erudite humanist and elegant writer, he was always starving, and a shameless parasite of the Madrileno grandees; paid his dinner with a sonnet, sold his pen to the highest bidder; and his fiery eloquence was ever ready to champion the strongest or richest side in any quarrel, private or political. This man the Marquis employed to translate, or rather adapt, one of those works of Richardson which were at this time drawing tears from every pretty eye in Paris. That author was notoriously a favourite with Mademoiselle de Lespinasse, and the young man's eagerness to submit "Sir Charles Grandison"

to the judgment of his compatriots was no doubt partly due to his recent intercourse with that lady.

Don Pablo Olavida was at this time leader of one of the most notable *salons* in Madrid. Sometime intendant of Seville, this man was now a dabbler in letters and a professed Voltairian. He was also extremely rich and a lavish entertainer, and in this quality added to his hotel a splendid theatre, in which the fine flower of Madrid nobility was used to act Voltaire in his own translated versions. Mora was his frequent guest, and the most admired as he was the most frequent contributor to the regular weekly discussions on literature which took place in this theatre. He presently consented to become a member of the company, playing the part of lover to its star, Doña Mariana de Silva, widow of the Duc de Huescar, a lady commonly surnamed the *Académicienne*, on account of her facility in divers literary and artistic pursuits. "The Duchesse de Huescar writes perfectly with either hand, composes excellent verses, and translates tragedies and many other works from the French." This gifted lady was also a draughtsman and a painter, and certain of her pictures were exhibited with such success that she was named honorary president of the *Royale Société de Peinture*. "And to all these acquired gifts she joined the innate charms of beauty, grace, and sweet conversation."

This intimacy of th eboards induced the inevitable sequel. "Having a thousand times exchanged 'I

love you's,' the pair began to believe it and so to feel it." Mora was apparently no serious victim, and he certainly was not permanently hit. The Duchesse, on the contrary, adored him, gave notice to her court of admirers for good and all, and hid her passion so little that all Madrid was presently afire with the story. The whisper soon reached Paris and excited the Fuentes family, for the Duchesse's sole dowry would be her beauty and her talents. And she was Mora's senior by only four years. To break the charm, the ambassador exercised all his credit to get his son's regiment ordered away from Madrid. It was quartered in Catalonia, and its young Colonel followed without an objection, unresisting, and with exemplary obedience. A love affair could pass the time, but he was scheming for no less than renewed leave and a return to Paris. Grégorio Munian, Minister for War, was, however, a martinet who turned a deaf ear to all his pleas. Mora was in despair, when an unhappy event beat down all barriers to his desire. His little son, aged barely three, died suddenly of the small-pox on July 5, 1767.

The terrible effect of this blow on Mora's sensitive nature is apparent in his letters to the Duc de Villa Hermosa, his best friend. His only thought now is to fly to his parents, and in their affection forget his trouble and his bruises. The military authorities gave ready consent, but grave questions were at issue with the Aranda family, and, detained by these, his spirit alternated between bitter discouragement and fevered impatience. "You should

know," he writes to the Duc, "what reasons these are which must keep me here at present, and will perhaps deprive me of the one possible joy after my bitter loss! . . . When everything was arrayed against me, I only needed to be robbed of the consolation of embracing my parents, brothers, and friends—all that I care most for in this world! There would be so much relief in that: it would so help me to fight this overwhelming melancholy. I assure you that I have lived through bitter days of late. How I have missed you! What consolation I could have found in your company!"

The Duchesse de Huescar's name seems to have vanished from Mora's distracted mind. But if she does not appear in these letters, he is very apparent in the elegies, *seguedillas*,[1] and harmonious complaints with which she solaces her furious and lamentable disappointment until—and that at no such distant date—his faithlessness is overlaid by the willing return of her numerous earlier admirers. Moreover, seven years later, and only thirteen months after the decease of the Countess de Fuentès, she married the Count, and so sat in the place of her who had beforetime declined to receive herself as daughter-in-law—a sequel which robs her of any claim to our sympathy with her shattered illusions.

[1] Casalbon remarks in a letter, "She has been bled twice, but this wretch of a Mora has filled her with such ideas that nothing serves to divert her mind. So she fills her days with *seguedillas* on absence and inconstancy, and says that Diocletian clearly knew nothing of such a method of torture, or he would never have troubled to invent others."

CHAPTER X

Changed opinions of Mora—His ill-health and discouragement—Similar ailments of Mademoiselle de Lespinasse—Violent outburst of mutual passion—Initial excitement of both—Mora visits Ferney, and is warmly received by Voltaire on d'Alembert's introduction—Return to Paris and resumption of the romance—Platonic character of the connection—Projected marriage with Julie—Mora, recalled to the Spanish army, hands in his papers, but is taken seriously ill and sent to Valentia—Violent excitement of Mademoiselle de Lespinasse—Consequent disappointment of d'Alembert—He travels for two months—Sudden return of Mora to Paris—Renewed passion, and relapse of Mora—His father insists on his leaving France—Painful parting of the lovers.

LATE in October, the last difficulties cleared away, the Marquis de Mora hastened to Paris, and was soon installed in his old apartment in the hôtel in Rue de l'Université. But the being who now occupied them was very different from him who had gone out thence a bare twenty months earlier: then he was joyous and "petulant," overflowing with vigour and life, and a curious seeker after all things new; now he was but the vague ghost of that former self. Suffering had outrun time in the working of this change, and the germs of his family's hereditary scourge had possibly seconded both. His letters show us a man who is broken and tired; who nourishes no more illusions, and doubts all things, even to himself. "But there is no remedy," he adds, having concluded a confession of his feelings, "and this dwelling on dolorous subjects can only revive their pain. I was born unhappy; to that lot I incline me. Ah! if I might have the consola-

tion of seeing all those who belong to me happy, on their joy my joys might hang! . . . Friend, mine years be few, yet where is the man, no matter his age, whose experience of this life is harder or more varied than has been my own! I think that I know it: I know that I think little of it." Doubt and cynicism join hands with this disgust. "Our Jorge" [younger brother of the Duc de Villa Hermosa] "does not forget to amuse himself at Madrid, and he does well. After all, what is there which counts for more—in this world?"

Whether or no Mora's health was responsible for this temper, it certainly gives cause for anxiety from henceforth. The letters of his relatives are full of remarks on his pale face and lack of flesh, and already in November he himself complains to Villa Hermosa: "You had not been gone an hour before I was taken with a dizzy fit, and so with high fever which lasted all night. Consequently, I am altogether limp—half dead, in fact." Such incidents, presently accompanied by hæmorrhage, now became alarmingly frequent.

There is a remarkable analogy between the feeling in these brief fragments and Julie's temper during the same period. She also is tried, finds that life has no savour, is without profit or motive; yet avowedly plunges into all its follies, seeking distraction and secretly afraid that it may not come. Such, surely, is the confession of these lines, addressed to an unknown friend: "When I was young, I surrendered blindly to my sensibilities, until I thought that they must cost me my life, as they did

cost me my health. In this way I won at last to a calmer and sweeter spirit, understanding that life need not be intolerable if only we will amuse and distract ourselves, and cling to nothing overmuch. This, dear Baron, is the secret of my life—the life which, you say, is that of one whose heart is dissipated. Do you really think that I was created to pursue amusement? that, if reason has told me to pursue its courses, my heart is always content with them? . . . Ah! if you knew the price that I have paid, you would not doubt that the letters of Héloise affected me to actual physical hurt."

This sincere confession provides a key with which to read Julie's life, to understand with what feverish desire she seeks to substitute the things of the mind for the motions of her passionate temperament and secret aspirations. The *salons*, literature, society—all become distasteful only too soon, and she leaves them, weary and disgusted, to come back to her original hunger for love, for sacrifice, self-surrender, and suffering. Let her strive to be content with that which she may have; to be satisfied, like the sage, with lesser pleasures and moderate joys—her violent nature overbears reason, and revolts against the victual wherewith it may nowise be filled. In other times she might have turned to the sweet consolations of piety, have satiated her aspirations with the passion of the spirit. These are not for her, or for her age. For her, as for it, comfort does not wait below the steps of the altar, nor may prayer warm an atmosphere which is as an icy cloak about her being. One remedy, she vaguely

feels, might assuage her woe—love as she sees it in the volumes which her eyes devour—the love of high passion and mad follies; the passionate love which is to the woman of her day all religion as all of morality; the creed which she shall presently celebrate in language as dithyrambic as any inspired prophet standing before his sole god. "Ah! how high is this love! how sublime! Thee, love, I honour, thee I celebrate, as very virtue!"

Intercourse between persons of thus similar characters, and so prepared for mutual comprehension, could not tarry long at the confines of friendship, nor is there reason to suppose that it did so even if their hearts did not beat in unison at the first moment of new meeting. Mora, on the point of leaving Madrid, answered to a jesting word from Villa Hermosa: "I cannot imagine what fair ladies you say await my return to Paris. I do not know myself beholden to any one there, so please believe that your presence will not annoy me with whomsoever you find me." Julie, on the contrary, was wont to date her soul's rejuvenescence from the time when first she knew Mora. "Eight years ago I drew back from the world," she wrote to Guibert on October 9th, 1774. "From the moment that I loved, its successes meant nothing to me." And in 1772, on the eve of the last parting, she was even more explicit: "Six years of joy and heavenly rapture are enough, even in the midst of despair, to make one thank the Lord who made us!" We need not read into this passage that Julie loved Mora two years before he responded. Her ardent

imagination was perfectly capable of crowning with a retrospective halo days in which there was still no more than a vague and tender attraction, as between two good friends. But whatever the truth in regard to the past, the couple no sooner met again than passion leaped to life. Their souls greeted each other until nature did but exist in the other's eyes, all else being lost, even to almost complete oblivion of the disparity between their ages. "When I spoke of this great natural disparity in years, I hurt him until he had soon persuaded me that as we loved, so we were equals. . . . He saw my soul and knew its passion, and then he cared little for pride of such a kind." It seems, indeed, that Julie's fiery spirit opened a new world to this young man of twenty-four, notwithstanding the opportunities for other conquests which the world had thrust upon him. For her he forsook all earlier interests; philosophy, literature, political ambition no longer exercised their old appeal. "Ah!" Julie will cry at thought of this, "I surely have understood the whole price of life, for I was loved indeed! A soul of fire, overflowing with energy; which had judged all and appreciated all, and which, turning in disgust from all, abandoned itself to the need and pleasure of love . . . thus he loved me!' All witnesses attest that this language does no more than state the truth. Even Marmontel, sceptic that he is, rises to the language of passion at sight of this. "We often saw him *in adoration* before her!"

But if this were Mora's case, Julie's transfigura-

tion is hardly to be described. She seems as it were to discover her true nature, and for the first time to be aware of what she is. A new bloom obscures past shadows, and life offers itself in a robe of colours heretofore unguessed. The real beginning of the Memoirs which she commenced, but which have perished, would date from this period, "as though her life had not seemed begun until they met." In the factitious atmosphere of the *salons* where, she smartly said, most Parisian women "are content with a preference, having no need of 'to be loved,'" the storm which fell upon her reft away all borrowings, and all those conventional masks that not even her honesty had completely escaped, and revealed to sight the real woman, the human creature always apparent in moments of real crisis. Once Julie loves, she becomes the woman who was to write to Guibert: "I have for you a feeling wherein is the principle, and which has all the effects, of all the virtues—indulgence, kindness, generosity, confidence, surrender, utter abnegation of all personal interests. All this I am by the sole thought of your love for me. But give me a doubt, and my soul, turned upon itself, makes me crazy." Henceforth Mademoiselle de Lespinasse lives only for her conqueror, and the interest of all her interests exists only by their connection with him. The charming phrase which one day dropped from her pen is probably to be derived from Mora far more than from his successor: "You seem to have a right over every motion and every feeling in my soul. I owe you account of every thought, nor does a thought

seem mine until the sharing it with you has won me a right therein."

In raptures of this kind, untroubled by a single shadow, the couple spent the winter and spring of 1768. Long years afterwards, Mademoiselle de Lespinasse still remembered it as the most delightful period in all her life. It suffered the usual curtailment of all things idyllic. Mora's leave expired at the close of May, and he was also pledged to make the inescapable pilgrimage to Ferney with his inseparable friend, Villa Hermosa—a pilgrimage now the absolute duty of all followers of the new doctrine. Julie was far from opposing a project so consonant with her creed; but much as this disinterestedness cost her, it was also to involve her best friend. Women deeply in love are often unconsciously cruel, and Julie certainly inflicted pain when she charged d'Alembert to see that Mora received from the Master the attention which, in her eyes, was his clear due.

The philosopher obeyed with grace, and even exerted himself more than need have been necessary; becoming in this a spectacle at once pathetic, saddening, and almost comic—a fact unfortunately too often observable in his attitude towards the affairs of her for whom his heart was so fond. Had he been Julie's husband in fact he could not, indeed, have more fully justified the traditional blindness of such. Because his heart is fixed, his constancy proof against all, his devotion tireless, therefore is his friend as sure as himself, and the eye of very day incapable of seeing any duplicity in her word or

deed. Deeply versed as he is in philosophy, d'Alembert was yet to learn that love cannot be bought by any service, and that sentiment is bound by no duties except such as it creates for itself. He is incapable of supposing that any newcomer can possess himself of the heritage which he has so richly deserved, and the visible passion of Mademoiselle de Lespinasse seems to him no more than the expression of her sympathies, a temporary fancy or simple friendship. So impossible was it for him to understand her as she was, that his "Portrait" of her, written in 1771, contains the remarkable charge that her chief fault is coldness of heart: "The fault with which I might reproach you—and I do but whisper it in your ear—is that you are ignorant of the meaning of passion."

D'Alembert did not escape the contagion of Mora's popularity. The letter sent to Voltaire at Julie's instance confesses this: "Dear and old friend, I have somewhat to ask of you, and I sincerely trust that you will not refuse my request. . . . There is here a young Spaniard of high birth and the highest merit, a son of his country's ambassador to the Court of France, and son-in-law of Count d'Aranda who expelled the Jesuits. You now perceive my young man's credentials, but these are in no sense his only merits. I have seen few foreigners of his age with a better sense of proportion, a clearer head, more enlightened or more cultivated. He is young, a noble, and a Spaniard, but I do not exaggerate. He is about to return to Spain, and you need not wonder that, after what I

have said, he is anxious first to see and to talk with you. . . . I will wager that after his visit you will only thank me for this introduction. . . . A young foreigner of this kind makes me blush for our native puppies!"

Voltaire's reply was couched in the tone to be expected. A grandee of Spain, Mora's other qualifications apart, was no such daily visitor at Ferney that the idea of his homage should not please "the patriarch," and Mora, with Villa Hermosa, left Paris on April 26th, assured of a ready welcome when their journey should end at Geneva. The parting with Julie was sad, but where is the need of anguish when two people are conscious of mutual love, and have absolute faith in each other's vows of fidelity? Each was, further, assured that the parting could be of no long duration, even should Mora buy his ability to return by resigning his commission. He was, it seems, pledged to this step, did it prove necessary.

Forty-eight hours later, the travellers alighted at Ferney, in their hands a second letter from the zealous d'Alembert. This was, if possible, even more enthusiastic than the first. "Monsieur the Marquis de Mora is good enough to carry this letter, although he will require no introduction when once you have spoken a few words with him. You will find him a man after your own pattern in heart and spirit alike—upright, clear, sensible, cultivated, and enlightened, in no way pedantic or dull. Monsieur the Duc de Villa Hermosa, his travelling companion, is one with him in deserving to see you as in desiring so to do. I have told you that you will thank me for the pleasure of this visit.

You will also congratulate Spain on the possession of such sons, and you will only wish that our nobles were on their model instead of on that of our *Conseillers de Cour*, imbeciles and barbarians, our dancing girls and our Opéra Comique." . . . Which Voltaire received visitors thus introduced needs no telling. He showed himself, as he well knew how, the kindest of hosts, the most charming of men. He never left them during the three entire days for which he detained them, and all the while he mingled his sagest talk with the most daring humours, lavishing his astonishing spirit and his incomparable facility.

The young men departed lost in admiration, while the sage declared himself charmed in turn, and he found it necessary to proclaim their praises by answering d'Alembert's letter on the very day of their departure. "May the Being of beings pour favour upon His favourite d'Aranda, His dearest Mora, and His well-beloved Villa Hermosa! A new day dawns upon the Iberians, for whom the custom-house of thought no longer bars the way to truth as for the Welsh.[1] The claws are cut for the monster of the Inquisition. . . ." Voltaire repeats the same tone when he writes to his regular correspondents, the Marquis de Villevieille, d'Argental. Dupont, and Pasteur Jacob Vernes. To all these he makes especial mention of the visit, and emphatically proclaims his faith in Mora's glorious future. "He is a young man of the rarest

[1] *Welche* or Velche. Originally any uncouth or ignorant alien, *e.g.* the Welsh (Celts generally). For use here, *cf.* Matthew Arnold's *Philistines.*

merit. You will probably see him as he passes, and he will astonish you. . . . I pray you see to it that he is presently admitted to the Ministry (in Spain), and I'll warrant that he will ably second Count d'Aranda in bringing a new era to his country."

Voltaire's enthusiasm led him astray on one point at least. Mora had little desire, at this time, either "to give Spain free access to all the good books wherein man may acquire a hatred of fanaticism," or "to file the teeth of this monster, the Inquisition"; for his head was fully occupied with the one thought of how he might devise means for returning to Paris and Julie. Thus, after the two friends separated at Geneva, the diplomat to return to Paris, the colonel to Madrid, the latter had scarcely taken up his duties than he began a vain siege of the Ministry for War which, at the end of several months, still resisted all his applications for fresh leave. He had not, however, decided to take the final step and hand in his papers, when family affairs once more secured his liberty. Despite their disparity in years—she was but sixteen and he nearly forty—a lively attachment existed between Villa Hermosa and Mora's sister, Maria Manuela Pignatelli. Mora was only too pleased to press his friend's suit, and the marriage was solemnised on June 1, 1769, in the palace of Count d'Aranda, who stood proxy for the husband, detained at the Embassy in Paris. Mora stood witness for his sister, and the special occasion gained him permission to start next day for Paris, there to deliver the bride

to her husband. The journey was made in state—with four carriages and fifteen horsemen for escort—and after eighteen days upon the road, the arrival of brother and sister at Paris on June 20th, added four joyful hearts to the city's tale.

The days which followed the new meeting of Julie and Mora were the golden age in both their lives. Separation may cool an affection which is less than absolute; theirs had triumphed over distance. Earlier moments might have yielded more tumultuous bliss; there was added to these days that sense of security and happy pride which is born of the certification that all is indeed well. It was, none the less, those earlier raptures that Julie was so passionately to celebrate at a later time: ". . . the most charming and perfect of all creatures . . .," "he who alone taught me real joy . . .," to whom she owed it that "for some few moments I knew how priceless life may be." "I was loved," she cries then, "in a way beyond reach of imagination. All passions whereof I have read were feeble and cold beside this of Monsieur de Mora. It filled his life. Think if it filled mine!" And when she answers for the manner in which she repaid this love to "this strong soul, impassioned for the pleasure of being loved," she puts these words in the mouth of him who is then dead: "Comparing the loves of which he had been, and yet was, the recipient, he would ceaselessly say: 'They surely are not worthy to become your scholars. Your soul was warmed by the sun of Lima; my countrywomen are as if they were born under the glaciers of Lapland.'"

Such violent expression of violent emotion must raise the delicate problem whether or no this friendship between two thus ardent hearts, both free, both emancipated from the thraldom of conscience, and disdaining social conventions, can have remained platonic. Most modern biographers deny that there can be a doubt upon the point—even forgetting that Julie was afterwards the mistress of Guibert. This argument need not hold good, nor do I believe in the correctness of this verdict. For not only did no single one of Julie's contemporaries suspect her relations with Mora, but the one compiler of memoirs who alludes to the matter specifically affirms that these relations were purely platonic. Madame Suard records that "The story of her connection with Monsieur de Mora she both wrote of, and confided to, Monsieur Suard, who had her permission to tell me. I can affirm that letters and conversation formed all the communication which ever these two had one with the other."

Final as this statement seems, Julie's own conduct at this time seems only more so. In Guibert's case Julie errs on the side of overmuch precaution and mystery: she cannot sufficiently display her connection with Monsieur de Mora. She speaks of him—"glorying in it," says Madame de la Ferté Imbault—in conversation with, and in letters to, her intimates—Suard, Condorcet, even to some of her woman friends; and this until it becomes matter for common talk among them, while d'Alembert remains almost alone in declining to see more than mere friendship between the couple. Julie

is equally open and lacking in self-consciousness where Mora's family is concerned. She sees them frequently, and receives them freely—Count de Fuentès, Luis Pignatelli, and Villa Hermosa. The one member of the family whom she has never met is the latter's wife, and this by no will of her own. "How I wish to know her! How gladly I would live with her!" she writes. Mora consistently opposed this meeting, alleging a fear lest Julie's excitable spirit should work too much upon this morbid sister's excessive affection for himself; but the real reason seems to have been that this sister was jealous of Julie, and her brother consequently feared a scene. This young Duchesse apart, nothing could be more cordial than was the attitude of all the Fuentès family towards their son's friend. They send her daily bulletins when he is ill in Paris, and the same when he is dying at Madrid; while, on the morrow of his death, the desolate father begs Julie to use all her influence with d'Alembert in order to persuade him to write the Memorial Portrait of this lost subject of all his hopes and ambitions. Everything, indeed, points to the fact that neither the family of Mora nor Julie's own friends ever doubted the real innocence of their relations.

Little doubt as may now remain, this contention can still be supported by even stronger proofs in the form of certain passages taken from hitherto unpublished letters written by Julie to Guibert. Writing as she may write to the man to whom she has willingly and freely given herself, she calls him

to witness that he alone, as the first, has triumphed over her long hesitations and honesty, and reproaches him—with scant justice—of having brought upon her that remorse and self-disgust which, she says, are breaking her down. "That momentary folly crushes my life. To have kept my honesty until I knew you seems vain indeed, for what matters that which I have been, when I have been false to the right and to myself; and, lost to my own good opinion, how can I pretend to yours? Or, if you do not esteem me, how blind myself and believe in your love?" . . . "I am become an object of scorn, and because I loved you. Because I gave it into your hands, you have doubted of my love, and as I sacrificed my honesty to you, so you have ceased to esteem me. All this is rightly the fruit and the price of abandoning virtue." Such language is scarcely open to two interpretations. The Julie who was truthful to tactlessness in her relations with the man whom she loved, whose frankness risked the alienation of a heart dearer to her than her own life, is no woman to have stooped to so meanly useless a lie.

This argument has not been set out in response to the somewhat vain temptation which besets a biographer the conduct of whose heroine has fallen short of the ideal, and whom he would therefore endeavour to whitewash. It seems, on the contrary, to provide an explanation of certain things in the later career of Mademoiselle de Lespinasse that have not heretofore been clear, in especial—though it is not as excusing it—of the act which

Julie was later to stigmatise as "her treason." Those who cannot credit a thus obstinate virtue on the part of so fiery and so emancipated a woman, are easily answered, and this without bringing into account the innate clinging to the letter of chastity, or that physical and moral repulsion to the final step which so many women find a stronger defence than all the pricks of conscience or the promptings of religion. With no desire to diminish her credit in the matter, less lofty motives and far more commonplace ideas were the determining factors in her resistance. It is now established that, almost from the first days of their intimacy, this couple had thoughts of its natural sequel—marriage. This idea, so far from fading, grew day by day, and it was not for lack of the mutual resolution that Julie de Lespinasse did not become the Marquis de Mora's wife.

Carefully as the couple guarded this secret, it was still suspected by more than one contemporary. The *Mémoires de Marmontel* contain a note to this effect, and the cynic proceeds to hint that Julie, more ambitious than loving, played her part in order to secure a brilliant match. Morellet, Marmontel's uncle, has left a note of energetic protest against this slander, which indeed requires no refutation. But while he asserts its falseness, he is equally explicit in respect of Julie's desire to be married. "And small harm in that," he adds, truly enough The whole affair would, none the less, remain conjectural, were it not for the new documents to which I have had access. Thus Count Villeneuve Guibert

possesses a MS. note by Madame Guibert asserting that Mora's own brother, Luis Pignatelli, told her that they were engaged, and would have been married but for her faithlessness and my brother's death. Suard, in whom she confided, writes quite openly to her: "I would gladly have heard more of your affair, and learned the present state of your hopes. When shall I be able to congratulate you? You owe me good news, if only to console me for having suffered communication of the bad!" Julie herself refers to the fact most transparently in a letter to Guibert which there will presently be reason to quote. Finally, the family papers of the Duc de Villa Hermosa contain numerous letters in which the Fuentès family freely express their disquiet at this intention of the heir of the house.

The real truth of the matter seems to be that Mora was early anxious to have an open engagement, while Julie de Lespinasse was very creditably desirous that he should take time to consider the indubitable facts of her age, poverty, and illegitimate birth. But she was not too loth to be persuaded, and when her lover continued to answer all objections with the simple formula, "Since we love, all is equal between us," she presently yielded. The Fuentès family, none too pleased at the prospect of which they were perfectly aware, although the Marquis never directly admitted them into his confidence, took the usual method of bodily deporting their son from the area of influence. Asserting that his always poor health was the worse for his

sojourn in Paris, they ordered him off to his regiment in Catalonia. Resistance was not to be thought of in a day when parental and military authority were equally binding, and he therefore obeyed without a murmur, though secretly determined to secure independence at all costs. The spring of 1770 was thus occupied in arguments with his friends and his family, and the latter deemed that they had surely won when, two months after his return to Spain (April), the Marquis was gazetted General of Brigade at the age of twenty-six, and was further nominated to a post with the Court. "I was extremely pleased to hear the news," writes the Marquis de Castimente to his cousin, Villa Hermosa. "He has abilities above the ordinary, and they will now have an opportunity for recognition." "I cannot say whether he is pleased," replies the excellent brother-in-law, "but I can express my own pleasure, for his ability can hardly be overstated."

These congratulations were short-lived, for only a brief while had passed before the young general cut short his brilliant prospects by formally sending in his papers. The alleged reason was poor health, only too true a plea; but no one pretended to believe that this was more than an honourable pretext. Abbé Galiani was fain to comfort Villa Hermosa in this style: "I am sure that he has sent in his papers, because this was the worst thing he could do! . . . But it's not philosophy, forwards or backwards, which is responsible. However, no need to fear for his fortune, since he can blow it thirty times

and still find means to recover himself." The lover was further from thoughts of his "fortune" than anything else. Paris, and there to remain for ever with his lady, were his only ideas, and he spent the rest of the year wrestling with the remaining obstacles to the fulfilment of this—the real reason for which he had sought freedom. They had all yielded, and the day for his departure was fixed, when a new obstacle arose, more grave and more dangerous than all which had preceded it, in an attack such as he had never before experienced. On January 25, 1771, the Marquis was prostrated by violent blood-spitting, high fever, and a fainting fit so deep and so protracted that he was at one time believed gone beyond recall. He recovered; but not so his plans, for the doctors asserted that both his lungs were failing.

The sole possible remedy, they averred, was to winter in some such climate as that of Valencia, "one of the most delicious in Europe." Jorge Azbor Aragon, Villa Hermosa's younger brother, happened to be there, and to him Mora went with despair in his heart, notwithstanding the companionship of two devoted friends who insisted on accompanying him and his doctor, Navarro. The end of the journey found him in a state of collapse, but two months later Jorge Azbor was joyously telling his brother of the patient's almost miraculous recovery. "Mora is fatter and a pleasanter spectacle than ever before; but as his lungs have not entirely ceased to pain him, I think his father should veto his leaving here just yet." A

subsequent report gives us a strange picture of contemporary medical opinion. "It will please you to learn that Mora's strength increases daily; so much so, that the doctors are considering whether they should not bleed him again, because, so long as there is pain in his lungs, too much vigour must prejudice a cure. . . . I repeat, that he ought to remain here until his lungs are completely healed."

Julie's anxiety, and sad alternations of hope and fear, during this period may be imagined. Indeed, as long as Mora was ill, the arrival of the bi-weekly post from Spain always brought this impressionable watcher a high fever, followed by "convulsions." None of the almost daily letters which now passed between them survive, but while the nature of their contents will not fall into doubt on this score, the following plea with which Julie accompanied one of Mora's compositions that she sent to Suard has its interest: "I have a certain hesitation in showing you this letter, for while it shows his real character it does scant justice to his intellect. He is a foreigner, and throws off these letters in the heat of the moment, so believe me that his brain is as good as his heart, and I felt this before I loved him." This line, written by a man (Guibert) who saw fragments of Julie's letters to Mora, may also be cited: "They had all the vivacity and ardours of her talk, and to receive them almost persuaded one that their lines were not written but were her proper speech."

Mora's illness brought trouble to himself and to Julie, but d'Alembert possibly suffered yet more.

He lodged with her, and she was not a good master of her feelings in these days of anguished soul and body, excited days and sleepless nights. Her always uncertain temper grew daily worse, and was now plainly acid, if not spiteful; now so miserable that she would pass days together before the fire, absorbed in silent contemplation of her woe. Rightly attributing all this to her anxiety for her friend, d'Alembert would attempt to help her by hastening to fetch his letter as each Spanish post fell due; but in vain did he rise at dawn, or—man of clockwork regularity that he was—postpone his breakfast in order to curtail her vigil by a few moments. "There's not a wretched porter in this city," says Grimm, "who runs half as many weary errands as our First Geometrician in Europe, our Chief of the Encyclopædists, the Arbiter of Academies, in his daily morning service for Mademoiselle de Lespinasse." Julie thanked him, but was at once reabsorbed in her distracted reveries and icy despair. D'Alembert was almost morbidly sensitive, and, the more that he could not properly understand her reasons, he took this treatment so to heart that his always delicate health was undermined by an attack of such acute sleeplessness as rendered him well-nigh incapable of work—his supreme consoler. His letters to Voltaire, Père Paciaudi, and his other correspondents, are full of this unhappy state. He complains that he is weak, tired, and depressed; his body useless and his head empty; that he is silly with discouragement and sadness. "And who knows how long it will

last? I had rather be dead than continue to endure it."

D'Alembert's laments were presently so justified by his condition, that the latter even forced itself on Julie's distressed vision. She was deeply sorry, and probably also remorseful. Conscious of her impotence, she appealed to Condorcet in a letter which breathes real anxiety for her devoted friend: "Come to my help, sir! I conjure you to do this, for friendship's and your virtue's sake alike. Your friend, Monsieur d'Alembert, is in the most alarming state. He is wasting enough to frighten one, does not sleep, and eats only because reason commands him so to do. Worse than all, he has fallen into the most frightful melancholia, and feeds his soul with grief and sadness. He has lost his activity, and has no will left. In a word, he must either die or be dragged out of this slough by main force." Julie's suggested remedy is the classical one of a tour in some fair land, with its enforced distractions of new scenes and fresh surroundings. She presses this scheme by many arguments, and was probably unwittingly the more anxious to compass it on account of the relief which she would obtain were his temporarily importunate affection spared her, and herself free from this witness to her tears. "We have joined hands to persuade him to try a change of scene—a tour in Italy. He does not quite refuse, but he will never consent to go alone—not that I should wish him to do so. He has need of a friend's helping care, and these he must find in some one like yourself." Here

follows a plan of campaign for overcoming his expected reluctance, and Julie insists that her share in all this must be kept secret. The sheet concludes with this postscript: "Monsieur d'Alembert has just surprised me over this letter, and I have confessed that it has to do with his Italian tour. He seems to have made up his mind. Here is your starting-point. Make haste to work from it. . . . Come, then, come! or do not, at all events, think a thought or make a move except with this object in view."

D'Alembert yielded, and Condorcet was ready to obey Julie's behest; but here a more difficult obstacle had to be faced in lack of means for the journey, for the philosopher's purse was not deep enough for such a demand. At this juncture he remembered the royal friend whose help he had once disdained, and pocketing his pride, he wrote to Frederic the Great in terms which were almost those of a suppliant: "My health, Sire, fails daily, and, while I cannot cope with even the lightest work, I am eternally sleepless and too terribly depressed. My friends and the doctors unanimously advise me that the Italian tour is my last hope. Sire, my poverty refuses me this remedy, and yet it is all that stands between me and the prospect of a slow and cruel death. . . . I am told that this journey means an expense of some 2000 crowns, if it be done with any comfort such as is indispensable to one in my infirm and broken state. I am therefore emboldened to ask so much of Your Majesty. . . ." Frederic sent the money within

fifteen days, but he could not refrain from accompanying the gift with an epigram: "The thought that these so-accursed kings can yet be of some service to the philosophers pleases me, for thus they may still seem good for something."

D'Alembert and Condorcet set out for Italy in October, and having resolved to see Switzerland on the way, they inevitably found themselves at Ferney. Here Voltaire proved so good a host, and the tone of the house so salutary to his visitor's ills, that the tour ended before it was well begun, for d'Alembert had no sooner recovered his sleep and spirits than the thought of further separation from his friend became intolerable. Thus it came to pass that November saw him back in Rue Saint Dominique, with scarce 1500 livres of Frederic's 2000 crowns spent. He duly deposited the balance with the royal bankers, but since the King declined to take it back, it was afterwards devoted to charity. "Monsieur d'Alembert does well since he came back," Père Paciaudi wrote to Condorcet soon after the former's return; "he needed his taste of travel the better to appreciate the sweetness of repose and the gentle life with a few friends."

While d'Alembert's thoughts at Ferney turned to the humble lodging of himself and his friend, until he could no longer withstand their promptings, and must follow them home, other aspirations, from a spot many hundred of miles away, experienced the same imperious attraction, and were doubtless more deeply shared by the philosopher's co-tenant. "In the blest land" of Valencia, Mora chafed bitterly as

his strength returned, and his irritable temper was apt to fall as unkindly upon the friends who kept him there as did Julie's upon her equally devoted companion. "His Excellency has a taste for tragics," groans Casalbon after one such scene, "and does not spare the colours in his speech. A man could not crush a murderer with rarer language than he has just used to me!" A few days later, these scenes came to an abrupt termination, for, casting caution to the winds, Mora escaped his friends and was away hot-foot for Paris. His nun sister awaited him at Madrid, but, with not a day's break of the journey for all her pleading, he never slackened speed until his friends at the Embassy were welcoming the traveller with more surprise than pleasure. Absence had certainly abated no jot of his flames, and he and Julie were the more inseparable by reason of the bitter days now passed.

Few spectacles pall like the affairs of others, and these pages shall not be burthened with a description of the renewed loves of the Marquis and his lady. Twin souls in imaginative capacity and exaltation, their ecstasies no doubt justified Guibert's posthumous apostrophe to the ill-fated lover: "Death came in the flower of thy prime, but in those few years thou hadst gathered all the flowers which Heaven accords to us men upon this earth." Day by day they passed their mornings together; dinner and supper found them reunited at the tables of complacent friends. If Mora had lent himself to the world's efforts, these days would have crowned his social career. Never was man more beset in the literary

gatherings which he consented to honour, nor was there a known *salon* whose leader did not aver that he had graced its floor. Even Madame du Deffand consented to ignore the confessed admirer of Julie, and entertained him in a brilliant company—Beauvau, Stainville, the Archbishop of Toulouse, Count de Creutz, Caraccioli. "It did not pass off at all badly," she wrote to Walpole next morning.

Pleasure, social admiration, or the seductions of gratified vanity were, however, powerless to woo the young Spaniard. "In the midst of the dissipations of the Court," all the fashion, "courted by the most entrancing women, he had but one business, one desire—to live in my thoughts, to fill my life!" Thus Julie; but she is herself no whit less smitten, witness her conduct in keeping her room, and refusing herself to all friends, during the week in October when Louis XV. commanded her lover's presence at Fontainebleau. "I was either writing or reading a letter," she explained. "He was away for eleven days: I received twenty-two letters!" This wantonness in love-letters, it may be remarked, is a characteristic of the times, in which their exchange was a veritable rage. "There are persons here," writes Walpole, then in Paris, "who write four such letters every day. I have heard of a couple, never out of each other's pockets, who were reduced to such straits for need of the outlet that our gentleman was fain to erect a barrier in his opened umbrella, whereover, or perhaps round which, he cast his missives into Her Ladyship's lap."

Julie would have tasted heaven in these days but

for the continual cloud on her horizon—Mora's health. Seine damp and social wear and tear were quick to consume what energy he had stored up at Valencia, and only a few months were gone before his old troubles again showed themselves, slight at first, then more serious, and always with increasing frequency. Naturally careless, and subject to the illusions of all in like case, the Marquis ignored his warnings and remained obstinately hopeful with each new attack surmounted. Julie's keener sight constantly brought her to the gates of despair. "Life does not contain the wherewithal to set against my suffering since Monday," she tells Suard. "For the matter of that, I may say that I have been upon the rack these three months; yet I can only love him the better for it." A climax came early in June, when her lover brought up blood so copiously that he was in serious danger for three whole days. "He has been bled thrice," Condorcet wrote to Turgot on June 7th, "and has now taken the right turn. But he did not deserve this good fortune, and the whole thing is terrible for his friends." "Mademoiselle de Lespinasse is still very unhappy," he wrote again to Madame Suard, "and these repeated drains on his poor remaining strength are only too good warrant for her fears."

Ill as he certainly was, Mora made an astonishing recovery; but, summer being come, Doctor Lorry prescribed a season at Bagnères, the warm springs at which place were highly reputed for all pulmonary affections. This verdict proved a wrench, but it was nothing to the troubles that now

fell upon the Fuentès family. The Count's means had not sufficed to meet the heavy demands of the life at Paris and Versailles and the huge train held requisite for his ambassadorial rank, and his fortune was seriously undermined. Yet, as if these twin anxieties were insufficient, he was now called to face the serious decline in his wife's health. She had ailed these many years, but had grown less and less strong, until it seemed certain that she was in a decline. All these troubles harassed the Ambassador so much that he declared himself disgusted with Paris for good and all. "His hypochondria increases daily, and certainly little of what he has to face can seem pleasing to any man's eyes." Azara, the writer of these lines, adds a few days later, "He has obtained temporary leave of absence;" but the Count's departure was final, in point of fact, for he was succeeded by Count d'Aranda, without having returned to present his letters of recall. On leaving Paris, he ordered his son to return to his mother at Madrid so soon as his course at Bagneres should be completed.

Julie's troubles at the receipt of this news defied her powers of self-containment. "Monsieur de Mora," she tells Condorcet, "was here last afternoon. He seemed very well, but the thought of three hundred leagues between us, and he with a mortal sickness, is indeed terrifying. Is it not fearful—this trouble which one affection can bring upon our lives? Yet, such is the power of sentiment that we would never agree to escape love!" Mora was little less downcast as the time of depar-

ture approached, but his younger temperament was more elastic, and he declined to meet tragedy half-way. Thus, he is sure that "my health is perfectly restored, and I am just where I was before this last upset. I incline to think that my present treatment shows better results than the former one, and I look to more permanent results." Another letter is in less happy strain: "The name of the Pyrenees, in your letter, makes me tremble. Cruel September looms too near." Yet, hope is quick to recur: "I could never consent to leave you if my return were not assured. *And then my vows will be complete, and all our hopes fulfilled.*"

Mora's last sentence refers to the certitude that he felt of being able to force the consent of his family when once he reached Madrid, and so to return to Paris triumphant, and openly affianced to Mademoiselle de Lespinasse. This promise remained with her as the one bright star in the darkness of her coming days, and is referred to in an early stage of her correspondence with Guibert. "You really ask strange questions: '*Has he a better reason than I for his absence?*' Surely he has many, and one in particular so absolute and of such a kind that very life should not acquit me of its success. Every circumstance and event, and all reasons physical and moral, array themselves against me; but this one reason is so strong that I cannot doubt he will return—no, not for a moment."

Gossip was quick to carry this rumour. Count d'Albon heard it from the depths of his estate at Forez, and forthwith fearing lest his sister should

at last claim her mother's name and a share in the family heritage, he stated a case for a lawyer, whose reply is preserved among the archives of Avauges. He need not have feared, for, "always and entirely full of a sentiment which concerned herself alone," Julie had no thoughts to spare for mere name or money. This opinion of Morellet is borne out by Julie's cry on her beloved's death: "No single worldly thought" has touched her passion in all the past six years. "What could he have thought of me if he had once seen me as so many women are? What proof could have shown him the purity of my sentiments then? Whether some delicacy attaches me to my poverty, or that I have never thought upon the future, I protest that not so much as once have I toyed with the hope of seeing my fortunes change."

Mademoiselle de Lespinasse felt as though the heart were reft from her breast when Mora's carriage finally swept him away to Bagnères on August 7, 1772. "All that I am is centred upon this one thing. Nature is without life to me, excepting only that one object which moves my being and fills each moment of my existence." This passionate Julie was, surely, altogether sincere; yet, seeing herself as she would be less than a year later, another phrase once dropped by her must no less certainly have come into her mind: "Nature's greatest spaces are marked by no milestones. True distance, the separations which terrify—these lie in the soul's forgetfulness. Death is their own cousin, but death is the lesser evil, for these are felt—ah! how long?"

CHAPTER XI

Fête at Moulin-Joli—Count Guibert—His high repute at this time—Popularity with women—Madame de Montsauge—Guibert impresses Julie—Her long illusion on the nature of his feelings for her—His German tour—Increasing passion of Mademoiselle de Lespinasse—Her remorse on account of Mora—Bad news from the latter—Correspondence between d'Alembert and the Duke of Villa Hermosa—Cruel agitation of Julie—She confesses her love to Guibert—His response—Growing jealousy on account of Madame de Montsauge—Illness of Guibert—Julie's anxiety—Guibert at last announces his return.

Among houses most frequented by social Paris in the year 1772 was that of Watelet, financier, farmer-general, author, engraver, and member of both the Académie Française and the Académie des Beaux-Arts. This accomplished man, of wide intelligence and cultivated tastes, had established himself just outside the city, near the left bank of the Seine, and not far from the Bezons ferry, in a rural abode which, on account of its novelty, provoked general curiosity and admiration. The "return to nature" was at its height. Having begun with literature, it now extended itself to all the arts, and especially to that of decorative gardening. The straight paths, square garden-beds and hedges of the old French parks, were beginning to give way to less geometric designs and more fanciful shapes. In this the financier Boutin, leader of the movement, overshot the mark, for his gardens were simply an accumulation of groves, meadows, rocks, waterfalls, and round-topped hills, resembling, Walpole says, "vege-

table puddings" and winding rivers "easily navigable in the nut-shell season." "There is something so sociable," continues this eternal scoffer, "in being able to shake hands across a river or from two mountain peaks! It is a conception that only one nation is sufficiently amiable to imagine."

Watelet had avoided this excess, and his domain of Moulin-Joli in no way resembled a "sample-box." Its two islands were connected by a bridge of boats bordered with boxes of flowers, and were covered with orchards, flowering shrubs, and wide-spreading trees—Italian poplars, elms, and weeping-willows—whose drooping branches formed natural arches "under which," writes Madame Lebrun, "to rest and dream with delight." Mingled with the rarer plants, wild flowers and weeds grew and multiplied at will, while, in different directions, vistas framed in wide-arched avenues led down the eye to some lovely view of château, village, church spire, or convent.

The creator of this enchanting Elysium lived here in perfect and harmonious unity with her whom he had associated with his life, Marguerite Lecomte, who, thirty years earlier, had escaped from her husband's house to follow him. This flight had taken place without noise or scandal, and the husband had been the first to show calm indulgence, abstaining from all complaint and reproach, and occupying his leisure, by way of diverting himself, in making "vinegar and mustard," and in assiduously frequenting the house of his successor. The world had, little by little, done the same, and spoke only with

touching respect of this sexagenarian couple, a model "*faux-ménage*," and very Philemon and Baucis of extra-conjugal conjugality. The best society, the most exclusive women, the dignitaries of the Church, all paraded their intimacy with "*la meunière de Moulin-Joli*," and crowded her drawing-room. At an entertainment given in October 1773, Watelet's mistress was placed at table between the Archbishop of Bourges and Mademoiselle de Cossé Brissac, daughter of the duchess of that name. After this dinner, the Duc de Nivernais sang couplets which treated all the guests, including the Archbishop, with the greatest familiarity; but the author reserved all the respect of which he was capable for Marguerite Lecomte. Every personage of their time, in fact, evinced the greatest cordiality towards the host and hostess of the "Enchanted Isle," the one discordant note in this concert being the austere disapproval of Madame de Genlis, governess to the children of the Duke of Orleans—and presumptive mother of her pupils.

D'Alembert was a constant guest at this hospitable house, and a life-long friend of its owner. "For thirty years," writes Watelet to Père Paciaudi, "we have either seen each other or exchanged some mark of friendship every day." Relations were equally cordial with Mademoiselle de Lespinasse, and there was never a luncheon, supper, or reception of any kind at Moulin-Joli to which she was not invited among the first, and especially welcomed. She was present, among other occasions, at an affair which took place on the 21st of June,

on a beautiful afternoon of this first summer month. Mora was at last convalescent after a terrible attack. His friend, freed from her long anguish of anxiety, began again to take an interest in life, and felt the need of shaking off for a moment the remembrance of those terrible hours. Among the many guests on this occasion was a person just coming into public notice, Jacques Antoine Hippolyte, Count de Guibert, colonel in the army, and author of a successful book of which mention must presently be made. A phrase in "l'Eloge d'Eliza" would seem to indicate that this may not have been a first meeting, but if Guibert and Mademoiselle de Lespinasse had already met in Paris, they had not hitherto found opportunities to know each other in any real sense. At Moulin-Joli, on the contrary, the customary ease of a country gathering, with its free invitations to wander through the gardens, offered an opportunity for conversation of which they readily availed themselves. It is easy to imagine them walking side by side in the beautiful shaded avenues which led to the Seine, or seated in the poetic shade of a weeping-willow, and there, among these charming surroundings, abandoning themselves simply and without mistrust to the instinctive sympathy which dawns when two hearts discover mutual tastes, feelings, and ideas.

There was certainly no thought of sentiment in this first meeting, nor, on Julie's part at any rate, any desire for, or anticipation of, closer friendship. "I was very far," she writes to Guibert in the following year, "from needing to form a new tie;

my life and my heart were both too full to permit of my desiring a fresh interest." Nevertheless, he undoubtedly made a deep impression upon her. Three days after the meeting at Moulin-Joli she writes to Condorcet: "I have met Monsieur de Guibert, who pleases me extremely; every word that he utters shows depth of character, and a strong and exalted nature. He is like no one else." She immediately procured his book, not then published in France, and read it with the greatest appreciation; and when her note of congratulation was answered by the author in person, a second conversation strengthened the effect of the first. She again confided in Condorcet: "Monsieur de Guibert has been here. He continues to please me infinitely." It was thus for good reason that Julie afterwards dated the event which was to change her whole existence, and bring "misery to her life," from "the day at Moulin-Joli." Nor does she by this diminish her right to deny premeditation, and to accuse Fate alone: "Are we free agents? Can that which *is* be other than it is?"

At the date of this entry into Julie's life, Guibert was barely twenty-nine years old, but had already achieved great distinction. Twelve years in the army had gained him a brilliant record in the Seven Years' War and in the Corsican campaign. Finally, he was author of a book, "A Comprehensive Study of Tactics," the appearance of which at about this time produced an extraordinary sensation throughout all Europe. The volume—the real foundation of his fame—was divided into two

parts, the second of which took the form of a didactic treatise upon the several European systems, and indicated the author's idea of essential reforms in tactics and strategy. Of this technical section we need only say that it overthrew all the old ideas, and substituted for them those since prevalent. Napoleon carried a copy of it, annotated by his own hand, through all his first campaigns. The first part, however, excited yet more general enthusiasm by its brilliant and fiery eloquence. In this, under the title of "A Preliminary Discourse," the young author audaciously attacked all the existing monarchies, that of his own country in particular, vehemently denounced absolutism, set out his own opinion of the basis upon which the old realm of France should be remodelled, and formulated, twenty years before the Revolution, the very doctrines which were the Evangel of the reformers of 1789.

No words can describe the effect produced upon public opinion by this language then so new, and by the sincere patriotism that rang through these exalted pages, so rich in their quick alternation between dreams and ideas of unquestioned soundness. It evoked nothing but praise; for while the army gloried in the success of an officer, the Encyclopædists exulted in a brilliant addition to their ranks, and Voltaire declared the "Tactique" a work of genius, the "Court and the fashionable world," says La Harpe, "flattered themselves upon opposing a colonel to the whole literary world." An imprudent critic was immediately crushed by a

wit's retort: "Those who look for spots in the sun lose their sight."

Not unnaturally, the colonel's most ardent admirers were often women, and the "Essay on Tactics" had its place on every tea-table and in every boudoir. A distinguished *salon* went even further when the interesting subject which it discussed during an entire evening was simply, "Is the mother, the sister, or the mistress of Monsieur de Guibert to be most envied?"

Public infatuation of the kind could not fail promptly to transfer itself from the work to the author. Many a great man and hero of the hour had been raised to mushroom renown in the excitable and overheated atmosphere of Parisian society during the last few years. The fame of the best of them never so much as distantly approached the surprising eminence attained in the space of a day, and long enjoyed, by Guibert. "He leaps to glory by all the roads," writes the great Frederick, and the patriarch of Ferney adds: "I do not know whether he will be a Corneille or a Turenne, but to me he seems born to greatness, no matter what the sphere of his choice." Julie de Lespinasse but echoes the general opinion when she says to him: "There are names made for history: yours will always excite admiration." No lesser word than genius was ever used to characterise him; no one ever doubted that here was the future glory of his country and the instrument of her regeneration. "He stands at the head of an intellectual group, for whom he is an oracle; his virtues and his ability

are so highly thought of by his disciples and friends, that there are those among them who rejoice to be born of his time, as I know not which philosopher rejoiced that he was born in the time of Socrates." Buonaparte, just returned from Egypt, was hardly the object of greater hopes to the educated world of Paris than was Count de Guibert at the time of his first acquaintance with Julie de Lespinasse.

Judged across the intervening years, such enthusiasm seems rather inexplicable, for it was of the kind which passes with, as it originates in, the personality of a man. It was not a product of physical perfection; Julie herself remains calm on this point: "His face is fine without being distinguished; his features are regular, but rather lacking in expression, and his general air is subdued and gentle. He has an easy carriage, and the free and natural laugh of early youth." Guibert's portraits convey an impression of force and energy rather than of charm and grace. They depict a man with large brow framed in thick, tight-curling hair; deep-set eyes, a rather heavy jaw, and a large mouth with full lips. The head is carried very erect upon a powerful neck. He was somewhat short in stature, but his bearing was noble and free, "with a certain adroitness and assurance of manner"—a man good-looking, in fact, and at all points, but not one to attract particular attention or in any way suggest the hero of romance. The secret of his empire over contemporary opinion lay, indeed, in that which is essentially fugitive—an almost miraculous gift of eloquence. He needed but to open his lips and an

audience was bewitched. His voice, exquisitely modulated, sweet and winning, stirred the hearts of listeners even before their minds succumbed to words which flowed forth like a deep-sounding stream, rich in imagery, fresh, strikingly expressive, full of poetic comparisons, expressed, one and all, with the utmost heat and fire, but also with extreme clearness. A mysterious fire seemed at such times to escape from the depths of his being and to illuminate the furthest recesses of his thought. "While he spoke with one," wrote Madame de Staël, "his mind was yours. His conversation was the most varied, the most animated, and the richest that ever I knew. In public or in private, in whatever frame of mind either he or you might be, his intellect was always at work, and he never failed to communicate his thought." This judgment of an enthusiast is seconded by that of Madame Necker, a woman as calm and as moderate as her daughter was the reverse: "More gifted in his own way than the most gifted, no one before him had possessed such marvellous and individual talent. His genius was knit with enthusiasm, and enthusiasm can alone describe him who, to the end of his life, was ever able to make all things seem in some way personally connected with himself by the sheer power of his own sympathy, thought, or action." On the morrow of hearing Guibert read one of his own works, this critic wrote to Grimm: "Our young man reads a whole play alone better than the best company of actors could do it, and women are borne dead or dying from his performance."

A man who joined to this power of oratory a peerless memory of which many surprising feats are quoted, a tireless activity, a capacity for work which enabled him to accomplish the most difficult and varied tasks, yet never curtail his social diversions, would at all times be an *Admirable Crichton*. Guibert was this to his contemporaries, particularly to such as were of the other sex. A professional Don Juan, indeed—and Guibert was not this—could hardly have surpassed the tale of his conquests, yet he troubled himself about them not a jot. "The levity, even hardness, with which he treats women," Julie once complained, "comes from the small consideration in which he holds them. . . . He thinks them flirtatious, vain, weak, false, and frivolous. Those whom he judges most favourably he believes romantic, and though obliged to recognise good qualities in some, he does not on that account value them more highly, but holds that they have fewer vices rather than more virtues." Again she says: "He takes them for diversion and distraction, and leaves them for the same reasons; nor does he consider their feelings sufficiently to feel it necessary to spare them." This description is not exaggerated, yet, so illogical is the sex, the less he cared for his adorers, the more ardently did they cling to him. He received as a fit tribute, so to speak, the love that he excited in all directions, and fluttered from one to another as fancy dictated. His own heart was never once involved, for in this dawn of his life dreams of ambition and glory left no room for sentimental reveries, and, as Madame de Staël says, not

without malice, "He was interested in his own thought, and perhaps in himself, to the exclusion of others."

These easy successes and short-lived affairs were, however, no obstacle to a serious and, so to speak, acknowledged connection. Julie's first picture of him says: "Monsieur de Guibert is really less lovable than he is worthy of being loved, at any rate by his friends and his mistress, for it is impossible that he should not have one." She was the more sure of this fact since, as will appear, he had already confided to her the full story of a tie, which, frail as it was, had all the strength and resistance to change that are the issue of long habit. Guibert's mistress, Jeanne Thiroux de Montsauge, now past her thirtieth year, had long nourished for him a calm, deep, and real affection. She was a daughter of Bouret, the farmer-general—a man long famous for his wild prodigality and ostentation, and finally for his complete ruin and tragic end. She was a clear-sighted, prudent, and reasonable person, a little commonplace, perhaps, but capable of true devotion, and, as Guibert writes, made for "a sweet and gentle friendship" rather than for great passions and frenzied raptures. Mademoiselle de Lespinasse is very scornful of this moderation. "I think he has made a great mistake," she writes. "He has fallen to one who arrests his progress, while worthy of a Madame de Moussetière."[1] Guibert himself echoes this complaint with signal injustice, for few

[1] The notorious heroine of a contemporary intrigue which culminated in the death of herself and her lover.

women, however loving, would bear, without complaint or apparent jealousy, the coldness, fickleness, and infidelity which were her reward at his hands. On Mora's departure from Paris, a continuous intercourse was established between Julie de Lespinasse and Count de Guibert. Their letters show us how unconsciously they drifted into this dangerous intimacy. Guibert, after several years of a connection which did not, perhaps, sufficiently flatter his vanity, was now at the point where a man, tied by habit alone, is secretly chafing to escape. He did not scruple to tell Julie this, and a year later we find her writing: "You have not forgotten what you told me twenty times last year? You had then every intention of taking a decided course and of breaking definitely with her. I remember having opposed that resolution, and at that time, as you know, I wanted nothing for myself." "You assured me that you no longer loved this woman," she wrote a little later, "and that your heart was so free of any real feeling that your earnest wish was for marriage." Yet, though thus heartless, Guibert could not escape our mortal need, whereby we would cloak our baser feelings with an air of nobility. His satiety was to be called the lassitude of a heart discouraged by the essentially common nature of a companion whom his utmost efforts could not raise to his own level. "After all," he remarks, "I cannot complain. Could I expect her to resemble me? to resemble you?" He continued to develop this theme with that warmth of expression which lent such power to his words, until Julie began, in good faith, to pity him

as the victim of a terrible mistake and to weep over this so misunderstood nature: "Only the unfortunate are worthy of friends; if your soul had not suffered, it could never have known mine."

This fictitious analogy of two hearts equally wounded, equally sorrowing, fostered a rapid intimacy. The absence of the Marquis de Mora, and the bad news received from him, left Julie without energy and almost without hope. Mental distractions or social pleasures could no longer beguile or assuage her grief. She thought that she found some alleviation of her pain in the intelligent sympathy of a kindred soul, passionate like her own, and equally unhappy; and while she sought consolation for Mora's sad case, the consoler gradually and insensibly enmeshed her in his charm. "You alone," she writes, "have perhaps won me a few instants of oblivion from my sorrow, and this blessing of a moment has for ever attached me to you. . . . My soul had no need of loving. It was filled by feelings of the utmost tenderness. The sadness which walks with such feeling drew me to you. You should only have pleased me, and you have touched me." She ingenuously discloses the depths of her heart in these charming and graceful words: "I had suffered so much! My heart and my soul were exhausted by too long sorrow. But I saw you; you brought new life and brightness to my soul; and now I know not which yields higher pleasures—the thought of my joy, or that I enjoy it through you." No presentiment warned her of approaching danger. Confident in her tenderness

and affection for her absent lover, she had no reason to mistrust herself: "Guarded as I was by affection and unhappiness, and by the inestimable blessing of being loved by a perfect nature, how should I fear? how foresee danger? And you! To a soul thus filled, and thus surrounded, you brought the fire of passion, the misery of remorse." Later, in a species of self-examination, she repeats the same thing: "I could not have explained my own thoughts. I alternated between the uneasiness of nascent passion and the too necessary and flattering illusion of having inspired tenderness equal to my own." She is disturbed only by fear lest this growing friendship should not always remain peaceful and helpful, lest her own nervous temperament may not presently cause trouble and dissension between them. "I have told you that our friendship cannot be like that of Montaigne and La Boétie—calm natures, fitted to receive gentle and natural impressions. But we are two sick people. Yet, there is between us this difference," she adds: "you are a strong and reasonable invalid, who contrives to enjoy perpetual good health; I am a victim of mortal sickness—such sickness as poisons what should relieve it, and out of each new remedy makes to itself new torments."

These last lines, in which we distinguish a new note, soon to become more accentuated, mark a stage in this story which must not pass unnoted. From this moment, in fact, and in spite of her enraptured illusions, Julie has by glimpses vague intuitions of Guibert's real nature, and a presen-

timent of what she is to suffer from this heart "more ardent than tender," having the flame of passion without its warmth, and too occupied with "glory" really to yield to love. Thus she comes to the day of this melancholy irony: "Something, I know not what, warns me that I might say of our friendship what Count d'Argenson said on first seeing his niece, Mademoiselle de Berville: 'Ah! here's a pretty Miss! We must hope for a great deal of trouble with her.'" And later, yet more clearly: "Unless I am much mistaken, you are made to be the joy of a shallow soul and the despair of a sensitive one. . . . Pity on any woman of feeling who depends upon your love! Her life would be consumed in fears and in regret."

These passages are no more, however, than a reflection of passing moods. Guibert need but protest, evince the least genuine interest, and Mademoiselle de Lespinasse recovers her lost faith in him, and is charmed anew: "If I were young, pretty, and charming, I should distrust your attentions; but as I am none of these things, and am indeed their exact opposite, I find in them a kindness and an honesty which have endeared you for ever to my heart. You have filled it with gratitude and esteem, and with all the feelings necessary to intimacy and mutual confidence. . . . You wish me peacefully to enjoy the friendship which you offer me, and the reality of which you prove to me with equal sweetness and amiability. Yes, I accept it—I cherish it; it shall console me; and to enjoy your society at any time shall be my chief desire, and

that whereunto I most do yearn." Thus the first stage passes, while Julie, alternating between doubts and hopes, joy and sadness, is constantly blown by contrary winds, and, divining in her heart the yet distant reefs which lie across her path, can yet find no strength to avoid them.

To dispel the mists which clouded her will, Mademoiselle de Lespinasse required the test of some new trial. She found it in a brief break in their growing intimacy. At a time when the taste for travel was little prevalent in France, Guibert from his earliest youth astonished contemporary society by his ardour for those long journeys which appeal so strongly to curious souls that crave new sensations, and which are also, as Julie reproachfully suggests, proof of a restless nature impatient of repose. "Motion is ever more necessary to you than action. This phrase sounds subtle, but think it over, and you will see that it is true." In May 1773, the Count was suddenly seized with the desire to travel through Austria, Prussia, and the Rhine country; to visit the battlefields of the Seven Years' War, and to study the military organisation of Germany under Frederick. Julie had, as yet, no right to combat this fancy; she therefore resigned herself, demanding only that he should write frequent letters as he journeyed. Yet, his promise given, she has scruples upon the matter: "See whether I am not generous! I give you back your word if the pledging it has caused you one regret. . . . Confess, then!—I promise that I will not be hurt. Vanity alone stickles for such a point, and of vanity I have

none. I am simply a good creature, very stupid and very natural, who cares more for the pleasure of those whom she loves than for anything more personal to herself. . . . Do as you please, and write to me a little, much, or not at all."

Guibert's departure was set for May 19th, a Wednesday, but on the following day Julie learned that Guibert had been seen in Paris: "I went myself to find out if you were ill, and—this will seem horrible to you—I believe that I really hoped to find you so. Yet, by an inconsistency which I cannot explain, I felt the greatest relief on hearing that you had left." Julie's earlier letters after their separation are all characterised by this same lack of ease and uncertainty, this ebb and flow of contradictory feelings. "Since I do not know how your departure will affect me," she says to him before he leaves, "I cannot tell whether I shall have the leisure or the will to write to you." This "will," as one might expect, does not even wait until Guibert has passed the frontier of France; yet the long pages received by him at Strassburg were certainly calculated to puzzle even a man so accustomed to conquest. Thus there are certain pages in which she seems to strive for self-control, and to find in his absence the courage denied her in his presence: "No! no! I do not want your friendship. . . . It exasperated me. I need rest, and to forget you for a time." Yet, a moment later, she weakens the harshness of this sentence: "Your absence has restored my tranquillity, but it has increased my sadness. I cannot tell whether I do or do not regret you. I miss you

as one misses a pleasure." She is haunted by fears lest he should forget her amidst the excitements of travel: "When you read this, you will be Heaven knows how far away. Your body will have travelled only three hundred miles, but what a distance your mind will have covered! You will be in the midst of such new sights, such new thoughts and ideas! I feel as though I were speaking to your shadow now; everything that I have ever known of you is gone; and how hardly will you find in your memory a trace of the affection which animated you during your last days here!" This prospect agitates her so much that she appeals in almost suppliant terms to that same friendship of which but a moment before she seemed so reckless: "Would to Heaven that you were my friend, or that I had never known you! Do you believe that you can be my friend? Think, just once, if I ask too much?"

Separation is opening her eyes to the truth. This agitation, this anguish, this emptiness of life, are surely no usual indications of pure and calm affection? She has known their like before. Therefore she analyses herself long and faithfully; and, trembling at her own answers, applies to her absent friend to help unravel her own soul, and to comfort her in her distress: "Tell me, is this the tone of friendship, of confidence? What is this which sweeps me on? Help me to recover my real self! Is this remorse, which so overwhelms my soul, my fault?—you?—your departure? What is it that persecutes me? I am at the end of my strength! At this moment I confide absolutely in you, yet

perhaps I shall never see you again." The mood returns a few weeks later: "I no longer know what I owe you, nor what I give you. I can scarcely bear your absence, yet I am not sure that your presence would help me. What a horrible situation is this, wherein pleasure, consolation—our all is turned to poison! What shall I do? Tell me! Tell me, where is peace found? Oh, how many deaths one can die without dying!"

The suffering in these lines is too patent to need explanation. Julie has lost the right to dispose of this quivering heart, so surely slipping away from her, whose every beat is now a species of treason against him into whose hands it was so lately given. A letter from Mora received on the eve of Guibert's departure, and full of tenderness and confidence, roused the first pricks of remorse. "He speaks of me, of what I am thinking, of my soul, with the knowledge and certainty given by deep and strong feeling." Her sleeping conscience sprang to full life as she read. She wrote to Guibert again: "I want to be sincere with you and with myself, and I am really afraid lest my present perplexity deceive myself. Perhaps my remorse is greater than my fault, my alarm itself the greatest offence to him whom I love." But, reason and seek to reassure herself as she may, the inner voice answers that she is really guilty. "What fatality led you to me? Why did I not die in September? I should then have died without regret or self-reproach! I would die for him to-day; there is no sacrifice I would not make for him. The difference is, that there was

then no possibility of 'sacrifice.' I did not love him more, but better."

The first separation between Julie de Lespinasse and Count Guibert thus begins the struggle which was to rend her soul for three years, and the first real blow in this long martyrdom fell when, early in the separation, a letter from Spain brought the saddest news. The Marquis de Mora's cure at Bagnères proved far from successful. Terrible hæmorrhages, combined with the bleedings prescribed by the doctor, weakened him to such an extent that it was doubted whether he could travel to Madrid on its conclusion. "He has left Bagnères in such a condition," Julie wrote to Condorcet, "that I fear for his life. His doctor is with him, but, though he may help him, he offers no guarantee against a relapse, which the Marquis could never survive in his present exhausted condition. He has been bled nine times, and was so utterly weakened as to be incapable of appreciating the danger of his journey. Most excellent and kindest of men, think of me in this situation!" Mora, however, reached Bayonne, where his sister, the Duchesse de Villa Hermosa, awaited him, and together they returned to the Spanish capital. Rest, good care, and his native air greatly improved his condition, but he had need of all his strength in a severe trial that now supervened. His mother, the Countess de Fuentès, herself very ill and declining rapidly, rallied her failing strength to combat her son's unhappy passion. Mora entreated her consent to his marriage with Julie. She replied with a formal refusal, and was encouraged in her obstinate

resistance to renewed pleas by the young Duchesse de Villa Hermosa, who dreaded for her brother the influence of "the crafty Frenchwoman." "I have a presentiment," writes Julie, justly uneasy, "that Madame de Villa Hermosa will poison the rest of my life. I trust that she will not also poison his!" These family quarrels and discussions, joined to the postponement of his hopes, threw Mora into a state of utter despair. His fidelity, however, remained staunch as always—witness again one of Julie's letters. "I have had ten pages from him, full of tenderness and sorrow. He is far more unhappy than I. He knows better how to love, he has more character; in a word, he has everything to make him the most unhappy and the most beloved of men."

We may well believe that if Mora had not been so weak he would have adapted his conduct more wisely to the situation, for mother and sister, thus defied, did not scruple to resort to extreme measures. Taking advantage of the weakness which confined the invalid to his room, they intercepted, when possible, both the letters leaving Madrid and those coming from France. This led to periods of enforced silence between the friends, followed by recriminations against the post: "Our letters are lost—there is great delay," Julie complained at first, but such an explanation did not satisfy her when the accident recurred. Her suspicions led to appeals to the Duc de Villa Hermosa through d'Alembert, whose correspondence with Mora's friend and brother-in-law, still preserved in the archives of the house of Villa Hermosa, is a precious source of information.

"Although Monsieur de Mora's friends approve of his silence," writes the philosopher, "they are nevertheless very much alarmed; they fear that he is unable to break it, rather than obliged by his regimen to keep it. We beg that the Duc de Villa Hermosa will kindly inform Monsieur de Mora's friends whether his lungs have recovered from the violent attack at Bagnères, whether he still suffers from fainting-fits, and what food he takes? We trust that these questions will be kindly pardoned on the ground of the friendship which dictates them. . . ."

Mora's brother-in-law replies to this request with the greatest cordiality, and spares no details: "You may assure his friends that his lungs have recovered from the attack from which he suffered at Bagnères, and that he has had no return of the fainting-fits. He is, however, still too weak to limit himself to a vegetable diet; he eats a little *puchero*, our Spanish dish of chicken and veal. He is even obliged to take his meals alone, and only yesterday was he able for the first time to do me the honour of dining with me. This is the first occasion on which he has left his room at such an hour. He goes out very little, and with every imaginable precaution against the cold, keen air of this country. In a word, I have the honour to tell you that he is recovering, but slowly. He begs me to assure you and his friends of his gratitude, and to tell you that he wrote last week, and by the three preceding posts, to Mademoiselle de Lespinasse. . . ."

Subsequent letters from the Duke, with others of

Mora's own forwarded through him, seemed to warrant hopes of a real recovery; and when the last of the winter months and the beginning of spring passed without a single set-back, Julie began to feel hopeful. But this was not to last. A month after Guibert's departure Mora suffered another serious attack. "He has spat blood, he has been bled twice," Mademoiselle de Lespinasse tells Guibert. "When the post left he was better, but the hæmorrhages may have continued. How can I be calm, with this thought? . . . Suffering," she continues, "has weakened my soul, and I succumb to it. At five o'clock this morning I took two grains of opium. It gives me calm, which is better than sleep. . . . I can speak to you now and bemoan myself, but yesterday I could not have found words to express my fear for the life of him I love. I must have died then, sooner than utter these words which freeze my heart. You have loved; think, then, what it is to have such fearful anxiety! And until Wednesday I am to continue in an uncertainty which, terrible though it be, yet commands me to live until then."

The anxiety which preys upon Julie, and which, she says, "keeps me between convulsions and fainting-fits," has a curious effect upon her feeling for Guibert. Her superstitious nature, reinforced by no religious sense, finds in her morbid self-torturings the just reward of faithlessness, and its proper punishment. An accursed destiny has thrown this fatal consoler in her way. "Yes, truly, I believe that my day last year at Moulin-Joli was fatal to my

life. . . . I hate and abhor the chance that led me to write you *that first note!*" She is not content with accusing herself, but blames Guibert also for the affection which he has inspired. "Oh, what are you, that you should for one instant have diverted me from the most charming, the most perfect of men?" Consuming bitterness of this kind spends itself in blaming, often with high injustice, the traveller who, much surprised by variations of mood to which he holds no key, is often puzzled how to read her real meaning. "I am not content with your friendship," she writes. "It was cold and thoughtless not to tell me why you failed in your promise to write from Dresden. . . . And then—shall I say it?—I am wounded that you should thank me for *my interest in you.* Do you call that response? You think me very unjust, very difficult to please. I am not so, but I am just a woman—very true, very ill, and very unhappy. Did I hide from you my feelings or my thoughts, there were nothing left to tell." "You are young," she resumes, a few weeks later; "you have known love, and you have suffered; therefore you claim a sensitive nature. Your claim is baseless."

Complaints and reproaches of this nature fill Julie's pen from henceforward; but they are still passing clouds, and quickly dispelled by her love. Each backward step is followed by an advance, and the fear of having offended her friend inspires as constant revelations of her love, until, further pretence becoming impossible, she loyally confesses the passion which nothing may withstand. Of such

avowals, few, surely, have found more charming and delicate expression. "I love you too much to wish to restrain my feeling, and to need ask your pardon is better than not to have deserved it. With you I have no vanity. I approach the state of nature with the warmth and good faith of the savage, and herein I confess no duties towards my friend, for neither this world nor its pains have yet corrupted my heart. Do not quibble; give me all you can. You will see that I shall not abuse the gift, and you will see how well I can love! My life is my love for you; mine only knowledge this—how to love!" There is tenderness again under the apparent rudeness of this: "I accept none of your praises, and that—I astonish you!—because they do not praise me. What do I care that you do not think me stupid? This is a strange thing, yet one true withal—you are he whom alone in all the world I do not care to *please*." And finally we see her cast away all pride, and in suppliant terms implore, in default of tenderness, a little kindness and pity. "Remember that you owe something to my misfortunes. I am unhappy and ill. Do these things not appeal to your kindness? Yet will I repay you with gratitude infinite. A poor motive, is not this, and a pitiable feeling?"

This language, so undisguisedly that of love, is not to be mistaken. Still timid, perhaps, the passion is yet full-grown, and already claims exclusive possession of her heart. Any doubt which Guibert might retain on the point could not outlast the deep suffering with which Julie regards his con-

tinued connection with Madame de Montsauge—a name constantly mentioned in her letters, and a connection which evokes her painful curiosity. She will know whether a letter from his mistress arrived by the same post as her own, and which of the two he read first? "You must classify us. Give me my place, and, since I have no liking for change, let it be moderately good. I shall not encroach on demesnes on which you *tolerate* that unfortunate person." Often, too, she bewails the lot of a superior man tied to so uncomprehending a person. "How comes it that this woman does not love you to distraction, as you desire to be loved, as you should be loved? For what else does she reserve her soul or her life? I am sure that she has neither taste nor feeling. She should love you, were it only for vanity's sake. . . . But what is this to me? Either you are satisfied, or you love her harmful influence!" These are Julie's own words, and she could scarcely have painted a clearer picture of the growth of the jealous passion which was to become the worst torment of her latter days.

Jealous pangs were not the only anxiety of Mademoiselle de Lespinasse at this time. She cannot conceal her engrossing fear lest her intimacy with Guibert, innocent though it be, may become suspect by the gossips, and the news of it travel to Madrid and bring despair to her faithful lover. "Chastellux," she writes, when this friend has one day made a discreet allusion to her new "interest," "maintains that I love you dearly. How does he know? Have you told him?" Julie was still more

alarmed when Madame de Boufflers told a large company of people, assembled in her own house, that Guibert was estranged from Madame de Montsauge on account of a new and unknown flame. He was travelling, she added, in order to "get over it." "After numerous interesting conjectures as to who *she* could be, I was asked whether I did not know you well, and how much I loved you, since I remained so silent? *Certainly*, said I, *I love him well, for this is the inevitable consequence of knowing him at all.* Then, you do know who she is?—all about it, in fact? *Certainly not: I know nothing at all about it!*" The mere thought of this scene and its possible openings for scandal terrified Julie, who implored Guibert never to mention her name and scrupulously to destroy her letters. "I can see them tumbling from the regular budgets that you pull from your pockets, and your carelessness makes me shudder." Her fears were certainly justified, else the passage just quoted would never have found place in these pages. She, unfortunately, was more prudent; very few of Guibert's letters of this period are to be found. The few which do exist, however, read in the light of passages from Julie's own, permit us to conjecture in what measure he reciprocated the great tenderness of which he was the object, notwithstanding that she was herself in some doubt upon the point. "What do you think of a heart which gives itself before it is sure of welcome?" Guibert's first feeling about this seems to have lain between surprise and something akin to uneasiness. He appears disconcerted by this headlong passion,

this manner of loving so new to him, and until now unknown. Neither the frivolous gallantry to which he has been used, nor the calm and tolerant affection of Madame de Montsauge, had prepared him for this impetuous flood. He tacked and retreated, wrote at rare intervals, and, when Julie complained of his silence, excused himself clumsily: "I say continually 'To-morrow I will write.' But the days pass, and I have written to no one. When you do not hear from me, be sure, once for all, that I am dead to the whole world."

Guibert, at this time, evinced a gift for avoiding the personal note—any note which can compromise a man, indeed. His letters retailed stories and descriptions interesting without doubt, but so banal in character that Mademoiselle de Lespinasse might safely relate them to her regular friends, even to the Marquis de Mora. "You tell me so little of yourself," ran a sad reproach, "that your letters might be meant for any of the ladies of your acquaintance. Mine could have but one address!" His ear was deaf to this. Pretending that he cannot understand, his answer saw in these transparent avowals no more than the assurance of friendship: "I cherish your advice, and think with pleasure that it means that you will be glad to see me again. I beg you to take care of yourself until I return. Try to calm yourself. . . . Friendship such as I feel, or rather such as you have inspired in me, has greater claims upon me than you can imagine. . . . I love your friendship as it is; its warmth makes my happiness, and does not, I hope, diminish your own." But in

the pleasure with which he anticipates again seeing Julie, he is careful to include d'Alembert: "I rejoice in Monsieur d'Alembert's friendship for me, and shall be delighted to see him again!"

Upon one point, however, Julie has leave for satisfaction. Guibert criticises Madame de Montsauge—her head and her heart. "What do you think," he writes, "of an affection which should be much stronger than yours, and is so far behind it? Ah! do not enlighten me—you would distress me too much. . . . Do you think I would not exchange her mind for yours—if I were able?" Yet the next line destroys the effect of these words, for it links disdained mistress and new friend as equals. "What a ridiculous list is this of those who are preferred to you! I give you my word of honour that you and Madame de Montsauge are the first objects of my thoughts. I could not say to which I write first; to-day it happens to be 'you.'"

Amidst these misunderstandings and disagreements, Guibert's journey drew to its close. Having exhausted Prussia, Silesia, and Austria, Julie heard with despair that he purposed visiting St. Petersburg. "I hate Russia, now that you want to go there. Before, I hated only the Russians." To Russia, however, he did not go, nor yet to Sweden; but Mademoiselle de Lespinasse was suspicious, despite her joy at the news. "Why did you abandon your Northern journey? I cannot believe that it is only in order to curtail your absence. You have sacrificed Sweden because some one has asked this of you, and you are content. . . . But, what-

ever be the cause, I bless the person or thing which hastens your return." At the end of August, Guibert was about to leave Vienna on his return. Three silent weeks ensued, and when Julie again received a letter, its news was little calculated to soothe her feelings. Upon the very eve of departure, the writer had fallen ill of severe intestinal fever. He had scarcely begun to recover from this serious illness when, thanks to a confusion of names —the police read "Guibert" instead of "Gulibert" —the author of the "Tactique" found himself implicated in the obscure political affair which had already sent Favier and Dumouriez to the Bastille. Failing to prove his innocence, Guibert fully expected arrest when he should cross the frontier.

Julie's reception of this news may be imagined. The political complication troubled her not at all, for her powerful connections promptly cleared Guibert of all suspicion. The news of his illness, and the fear that he had not told the worst of it, were other matters. She was afflicted beyond description. "From the tone of your letter, I see that you are very weak, very pale, and very despondent. . . . In the name of friendship, take no risks. Sleep, rest, and do not in your haste to arrive the sooner risk the chance of never returning!" This was wise counsel, and she probably wished it unsaid when the first week of October brought another letter—still from Vienna—in which the writer expressed himself uncertain as to whether he should return to Paris or yet further prolong his travels. "Come back! come back! to go on would be *criminal*." Julie's urgent entreaty bore fruit in a reply dated

the 9th of October: "This time I am really coming, and that you may feel quite sure of it, I report that I have had no fever for four days, that my carriage is waiting, and that I shall have entered it within two minutes. . . ." He expected to travel by short stages, but the end of the month should see him home without fail. Mademoiselle de Lespinasse was overjoyed by this promise, until jealousy prompted the fear that he might first visit La Bretèche and Madame de Montsauge. "When I see you, you will doubtless still be engrossed with your meeting with her whom you love. Acknowledge that you will be further from me that day than you were at Breslau. But why should I object! Come to me after that excitement has passed, and I shall be only too happy." Guibert good-humouredly tries to dispel this fear. "I shall see you before 'her.' This is doubtless because Paris lies first on my road, yet were the reverse true, I would still come straight to you, did I think that your suffering, your health, or your soul demanded it."

The feelings with which Mademoiselle de Lespinasse awaited this meeting were indeed tumultuous, for love and fear, desire and jealousy, were struggling for the mastery. She confessed so much to the man who henceforth held her life between his hands. "My remorse at yielding to my liking for you now seems my reproach. . . . Did I then deceive myself? Do I do so now? By my faith, I cannot tell. Your soul is not crushed by sorrow. Judge then for me, and when we meet you shall yourself instruct me whether I must applaud or deplore those feelings wherewith you have inspired me."

CHAPTER XII

Guibert returns to Paris—Julie's passionate outburst—Guibert breaks with Madame de Montsauge—*Soirée* of February 10, 1774—Tragic coincidence—First excitement after the fact—Julie closes her *salon*—First disillusionment—Jealous suspicions on meeting Madame de Boufflers and Madame de Montsauge—Scenes between the lovers—Julie's despair at her own weakness—Serious relapse of the Marquis de Mora—d'Alembert's attempts to bring him back to Paris—Mora's secret doubt of Julie's faithfulness—He sets out to rejoin her—Accident consequent on fatigue of the journey—Final letter to Julie—His death—Julie's anguish and attempt to commit suicide—Persistent remorse—Her letters to the dead man—Surprising patience of Guibert.

More entirely even than before his return did Guibert now exercise his irresistible attraction upon Julie. Naturally, as it were, and certainly at the cost of no effort, this man could release her soul from its chaos of contending feelings, lead it from doubt to hope, from hope to rapture, or consign it to nethermost despair, and all in a moment of time. He returned from his travels with redoubled fame, for had he not met with the finest reception on all sides, even from the great Frederick, whose intimacy he had enjoyed for a week. Voltaire, after his visit to Ferney, had called him a "great man," and the opinion was more than ever unanimous that his name would figure among the most eminent in history. He certainly would have been the last to doubt this verdict, and it was in perfect good faith that he said, while sitting for his portrait, "No man should be painted to whom posterity will not erect a statue."

Mademoiselle de Lespinasse was not chiefly enslaved by the brilliancy of this "genius." Although she admired him without reserve, she was sometimes disquieted by the conviction that strong spirits like his must love rather as a pastime than because love is the cause and end of life. "I often see Monsieur de Guibert," she confides to Count de Crillon; "I find him very charming, but he undoubtedly describes himself when he says of his 'Constable':

'His talents moved him, and his soul weighed-down.'

He has a devouring activity which quickly exhausts one interest after another, so that the engagements of others are to him weariness."

Let Julie fear never so much, however, all doubt vanished at a glance from his glowing eyes, a tone of that eloquent voice, the ardent words of which thrilled her to the depths of her being. For Guibert had at last fallen under the spell of the "enchantress," her passion stirred in his veins, and he dreamed with her of ineffable raptures and unknown realms of joy. He assured Julie that he had definitely severed his relations with Madame de Montsauge, and we may imagine with what gratitude she repaid this sacrifice. He was free. Could woman ask more, or, having asked so much, delay yet another hour in yielding herself to the flood?

Mademoiselle de Lespinasse had won her hope, yet it brought neither the calm of confidence nor the sweetness of surrender. Sick in mind and body, she was the victim of an incessant fever. "My

health is detestable," she wrote a few days before Guibert returned; "I cough myself to pieces, and the cough is so violent that I spit blood. My voice is gone, and so is my sleep—or almost so." Agitation and remorse at the thought of Mora, and her yearning for the continual presence of him whose occupations too often called him away, increased this hectic condition, and what few notes of this period survive contain repeated entreaties to him to come to her every day and every hour. "My friend, I am not to see you, and you tell me that this is none of your fault. Yet, had you the thousandth part of my desire for that meeting you were here and I were happy, for to me there is no alternative between him whom I love and loneliness. . . . Shall I see you in the morning or in the evening? Better the morning, which comes earlier, and the evening, which lasts longer! But give me that which you may; I shall content me with it!"

Julie's inconceivable sensitiveness was wounded by the slightest forgetfulness or neglect, and correspondingly touched by the least attention. "My friend, I love you as you should be loved—to excess, to distraction, with rapture, with despair. For days you have tortured my soul, yet I saw you this morning and all was forgotten. Nay! it seemed to me that to love you with all my soul, to be ready to live and die for you, was not enough. Your desert is above even this!" There is only one ending possible when a man and woman thus write, nor was that end far distant. Julie's own letters are again the sources from whence her story is to be known.

Whether through the kindness of a friend or by stretching her own finances, Julie de Lespinasse enjoyed the luxury of a box at the Opera during the winter season of 1774. It was a large box and a comfortable, with an ante-chamber in which to spend the time between the acts. Guibert had a standing invitation to share it, and he was usually the only guest. Side by side in the box, more often upon the "good sofa" in the elegant "boudoir" behind, the pair sat chatting, and as Guibert acknowledges, "listening very badly" to "The Village Wizard," "Vertumnus and Pomona," or the other fashionable pieces of the day. By Julie's frequent confession, the "divine art of song" was prone to move her mind and senses. Its influence was not diminished when her feelings were keyed to the present pitch. Thus the opera, on the evening of February 10th, proved traitor when its conclusion found the pair seated together in the "boudoir." In the ensuing silence their lips were drawn together; they drank, as Julie writes, the cup of "delicious poison."

By a tragic coincidence, on the same day and at the same hour, the Marquis de Mora was again struck down, in his distant home at Madrid, by a fresh last attack of his malady—a terrible last relapse, after which his remaining days were no more than a long-drawn death. Exactly one year later, on February 10, 1775, Julie was startled by the thought of this anniversary. "It strikes midnight, my friend. My blood is frozen by sudden remembrance! . . . By what fatality is it that the keenest and

sweetest joy is linked with the most crushing misfortune! Great God! A year ago, at this time, Monsieur de Mora was stricken to death, and I, at the same instant, three hundred miles away, was more cruel and more guilty than the ignorant barbarians who killed him! I die of regret. . . . Farewell, my friend; I should not have loved you!"

The news of Mora's death travelled slowly, and did not reach Paris until March. Thus, for a few ecstatic weeks, Julie rejoiced, untroubled by the terror and remorse which were to follow. Her rapture forgot all qualms, and her tongue echoed her rapture: "How is it with you?" she wrote on the day succeeding the fatal opera. "Shall I see you? Ah! deprive me of nothing. Time is so short, and I set such price upon the hours shared with you! My friend, there is no longer opium in my blood or in my head. There is worse—worse—matter to make me bless Heaven and cling to life, were it sure to be returned with equally intense feeling by you. . . . Yes, you should love me to distraction. I exact nothing, I pardon everything, I am never angry. My friend, I am perfect, for I love you perfectly." "I have thought of you constantly," she begins anew, a few days later. "I am so engrossed in you that I understand the feeling of the devotee for his God." Eighteen months later, recalling this period of infatuation, she repeated this comparison. "You speak of Lucifer, who aspired to equal God. I did outstrip him once, for then I would not have changed places with him! . . . Every instant of my life, O friend, I suffer, I love

you, I await you." Was ever note briefer or more eloquent than this last?

For a while no thought of her "treason," of "the sacrifice of her virtue," of all those things which were afterwards such torture, troubled these delirious hours, when her whole being was engulfed in the flood of passion. "February 10th has sealed my fate —to love you or to die." Her nature was so changed that she believed herself for ever free of her pursuing weaknesses—jealousy and suspicion, and a chance meeting with Madame de Montsauge strengthened the conviction. Julie admired her rival's face and figure, and hoped, she says, that her character was correspondingly amiable. "I believe it, and even desire it. Am I generous?" This generosity even inspires her to take an interest in the young daughter of her erstwhile foe. "Here at last is the book. But I give it to you only on condition that you give it to Madame de Montsauge. Though her daughter is older than *Emilie*,[1] it will still be useful to her. There be many such *beplumed ladies* who need it, but they could not profit by it, for to them all good things must ever, like their plumes, be over their heads."

Mademoiselle de Lespinasse could no more continue in such a mood than could intercourse between two people of such opposite characters remain peaceful. Julie, we know, was immoderate, absolute, giving herself utterly and exacting nothing less; Guibert was a man who craved action and movement,

[1] *Les Conversations d'Emilie*, par Madame d'Epinay, then recently published.

and who also brought to love the levity and egoism of a nature ruined by too numerous conquests. Her penetrating intelligence was quick to recognise how deep a gulf separated them. "Amusement, occupation, and action fill your life sufficiently. My happiness is in you, and in you alone."

Time could only amplify the result of such essential differences. Julie's passion left her no room for other interests; she no longer found pleasure in the world, either fashionable or intellectual. "Do not tell me that society has resources. It is to me an insupportable constraint, and if I could persuade Monsieur d'Alembert to leave me, my door would be closed." This new hunger for solitude, quiet, and silence led her to be very unjust even to those whose friendship she had once most valued. She can now perceive only their arrogance, foolishness, and conceit—"the collection and assortment which has peopled hell and small houses for a thousand centuries. This," she continues, "filled my room last evening, and that the walls still stand and the floor still bears are things surely portentous! Surrounded by all these prigs, blockheads, pedants, fools, and abominable persons, with whom I have spent my day, I have thought only of you and of your follies. I have needed you and longed for you." Here is another pleasant description of her old associates: "Heavens! how I hate and despise them, and how terrible my life of the last ten years would seem to me now! I have seen the petty vices of these people at such close range, I have so often been the victim of their small and ugly passions,

that I hold them in invincible disgust, and a fear which would find entire isolation preferable to their horrible society."

Guibert, on the contrary, could never dispense with the tumult that she so abhors. He must have a public, the applause and admiration of his kind. "You are not made for intimacy," she murmurs sadly; "you need the action of the outside world, the hubbub of society. It is not your vanity which demands this, but your activity." Alone with any one, even his mistress, he feels an unconquerable lassitude, is visibly chilled, and allows the conversation to languish, sometimes almost falls asleep. "Last evening," she wrote one day, "resembled those insipid novels which make both the author and the reader yawn. I shall have to quote the King of Prussia on a more memorable occasion, and say, 'We will do better another time.'" Yet, in spite of these humiliations, her morbid craving for his society abases her pride to the point of begging for a few more moments of his time. "Do you know why I prefer to see you in the evening rather than during the rest of the day? Because the lateness of the hour arrests your activity! You can no longer fly to catch Madame So-and-so, or to see Gluck, or to do any of the useless things which seem to interest you only because they enable you the sooner to leave me."

A persistence which would always be strange becomes the stranger since Julie was every day more clearly disillusioned as to the heart which she had supposed her own. She knew it within

three months. "How could I have been so mistaken, he have so deceived me? How did my spirit fail to restrain my heart, and how can that heart for ever sit to judge you, yet be no less eternally your slave at call?" A single doubt as to Guibert's utter incapacity for real feeling is now inadmissible, or that love, in his kind, is more than "the accident of his age." Give him the ideal woman, all grace and endowed with all perfections —"the face of Madame Forcalquier at twenty Madame de Brionne's nobility, the spirit of Madame de Montsauge grafted upon that of Madame de Boufflers"—not for a moment could he make ever this ideal happy. The Julie who knew this could expect nothing for herself. Conviction became so strong that rarely indeed does she dare to speak openly, or to give expression to the deep springs of her being. "I speak to you neither of my regret nor of my remembrances, nor, crueller far, may I show you more than a part of my love for you, while my soul must contain the passion with which you fill it . . . For I must repeat this thing, 'He could not respond, he could not understand, and the pain of it would kill me.'"

Mistrust naturally followed fast upon lost illusions, and dormant jealousy lifted a head more active and more unruly than ever. Guibert was undeniably pursued by her sex; there was no need to search for rivals, yet Julie's skill in forging her own deceptions was marvellous. Madame de Boufflers was early suspect, and possibly not without cause for her exquisite charm and wit we already know

no less than her skill in the art of pleasing, and her lifelong and consistent desire for admiration. Her letter written to Guibert while in Germany, and afterwards found among the papers of Mademoiselle de Lespinasse, shows her cleverness in finding the weak spot in this conceited man: "Of my presumption, sir, I do confess me; yet, new as is our acquaintance, I claim the rights of old friendship. You have directed letters hitherward, and I repine in secret, for never a one is sent to me. I cannot feel surprise at the King of Prussia's reception of you, but I do admire your noble confession of confusion in his presence and of your respect for him. . . . Keep your noble enthusiasm. Never be persuaded that man's natural gait is to crawl in the mud. A spirit like this of yours is a never-ending pleasure. A small share in it you have permitted me. In this lies the supreme happiness of my life, yet I may not dare speak of it to any one but you. . . ."

Guibert's frequent calls on Madame de Boufflers, after his return from Prussia, led to instant gossip. The rumour of course reached Julie's ears, and produced intense agitation: "Abbé Morellet said a few days ago, in the innocence of his heart, that you were much enamoured of Madame de Boufflers, that you were much preoccupied with her and with the desire of pleasing her, &c. All this seems so probable that I feel I ought to complain that you have not confided in me, even though the truth be something less than report says. I ask from you but one satisfaction, *the truth*, and be assured that there

is nothing that I cannot bear to hear. You may think me weak, and wish to spare me, but the fact is not so. Never, on the contrary, have I felt stronger. I have the strength to suffer." Neither Guibert's denial, nor the disdainful tone in which he takes care to speak of Madame de Boufflers, availed to banish Julie's suspicion, and her letters are full of stinging allusions and veiled reproaches on this subject. But the Countess is only a slight annoyance, a surface grievance; Julie's real torment, which gnaws constantly at her heart, is jealousy of Madame de Montsauge. Though Guibert kept faith and were no longer her lover, he remained a friend of his old mistress, and confessed a regard for her which was more than Julie could bear. "I notice that you take pleasure in paying attentions to Madame de Montsauge. . . . You give or lend to her anything that interests you, while I must ever endure the other extreme—forgetfulness, neglect, refusal. Three months ago you promised me one of your books, and I have had to borrow it of another. It is doubtless well that the sufferer from this ungraciousness should be myself. There is justice in this, and I do not complain—except of its excess." This is the voice of Julie's bitterness. Despair follows fast: "When you read this, I wager that you will already have received a note saying:

> 'For thee I mourn the transports of my heart;
> Where is thy joy, if Montsauge lack her part?'

Ah, believe her, restore to her her tranquillity, and, if possible, be happy. This is the wish, the desire,

and the prayer of the unhappy creature to whom is ever present the terrible inscription on the Gate of Hell—'All ye who enter here, leave hope behind.'"

In May, Guibert spent several days at La Bretèche, the château of her who inspired Julie with such fear and hatred. This first real separation since the fateful tenth of February would have cruelly wounded Julie even if her rival had not been the cause of it. Her pain may be read between the lines of her utter silence. To Guibert, in Paris, she writes upon any and every pretext; Guibert absent received not one single line, and Julie made the reason for this very clear in the bitter note which met his return: "Do not oblige me to say why I cannot write to you *where you are*. I dare not own the reason, even to myself; it is a thought, a feeling, upon which I dare not reflect—a martyrdom horrible to me, which humiliates me, such as I have never before known." Next day duly brought the first of many quarrels between the lovers. Julie raged, Guibert was cold and disdainful, and when they had parted she wrote this miserable note: "Sunday, midnight. — You have, then, forgotten and left to her own devices this fury, this fool, and wicked one! The unhappy creature passed her day in Limbo, for she awaited an angel of consolation, and he did not come. He was undoubtedly making some celestial creature happy, and he himself was so intoxicated with the joys of heaven as to exclude any possible remembrance of me." This thought revived her anger. "If, in truth, he is happy, I hope from the bottom of my heart that

nothing will bring him back to me, for I am so unjust as to hate his happiness, and to hope that repentance and remorse will pursue him. . . . Such are the desires, such is the hope of the soul which has best loved him, and of which the dearest wish would be fulfilled by death."

Quarrels of this sort are the reverse of astonishing. The one strange thing really was that, amidst repeated shocks, and despite so many disappointments and reasons for disagreement, intercourse of any kind should have been possible between two beings so radically unlike. More than once Julie herself considers this problem with unspeakable anguish: "I cannot explain your hold upon me. You are not my friend; that you can never be. I have no confidence in you. You have done me the greatest wrong which can afflict a virtuous soul. You are depriving me, perhaps for ever, of the only consolation which Heaven had granted to my remaining days" (her marriage with Mora), "yet I think of this, I contemplate it, and I am drawn to you by a feeling which I loathe, but which has the power of a fate or of a curse upon me." . . . "My friend, did we live in the days of magic, I should explain my feeling for you by saying that you have cast over me a spell which has taken me out of myself." Better than she cares to own even to herself, Julie knows the secret of this "magic" which draws her to the man through whom she has known love in all its fulness. "I know, after all, that I shall find no solace in your soul, my friend; it is empty of tenderness and affection. You have but one means to banish

my ills—the intoxication which is a worse remedy than the worst of my misfortunes." She has drunk of this cup, and her lips are dry with thirst of that wherewith they were quenched. This is the secret tragedy which now begins to break down her strength. Humiliation for her fall, the constantly recurring struggle between soul and body, sense and reason, now torment and sap her being until she succumbs at no long distant date. What has been shown to us as uneasiness and shame to-day became on the morrow an incurable sore of her soul—the just and terrible vengeance, she thinks, of him whose tenderness she betrayed.

After the serious relapse of February, Mora remained in a deplorable state of mental prostration and physical collapse; nor did the death of his mother from the same disease which was consuming her son, better his friends' hopes for his recovery. He himself, so long deluded as to his health, began now for the first time to fear the worst. He spat blood incessantly, and was never without fever. The doctors of Madrid, assembled at his bedside, had recourse to the most violent remedies—enormous doses of iron and quinine and constant bleedings—the latter a Spanish custom. "In no place in the world do they bleed their sick as in Madrid!" cried d'Alembert at the news of these sad details. Justly fearful of this treatment, Mademoiselle de Lespinasse's "secretary" renewed the one idea which recurs like a refrain in his letters to the Duc de Villa Hermosa—to snatch the sick man from ignorant hands, from the "dry and burning"

climate of Madrid, and to bring him to Paris, to the care of enlightened practitioners. "I hastened," he writes, "to convey the news to Mademoiselle de Lespinasse, who was waiting for it with a fear and terror which alarmed me. Nowhere in the world can Monsieur de Mora be more beloved than in this little corner of ours. . . . Remember that the mistakes of the Spanish doctors have already well-nigh cost Monsieur de Mora his life. What promise have we that they will be less blind or do better hereafter? To bring him back to France would be a deed worthy of your friendship for him, and you will be able to say, not only that you have assured the health of your friend, but that you have saved his life. . . . This plan seems to me very simple," he again insists, "when I think of your affection for the Marquis de Mora, and of the urgent necessity of removing him from that fatal air, and of rescuing him from the doctors who have poisoned him."

It is very probable, as Marmontel says in his "Mémoires," that this thought was inspired by Mademoiselle de Lespinasse, and certainly none could blame her for it when Mora's friends were united in the belief that a continued sojourn in the Castilian capital must entail his almost immediate death. "I am discouraged by Mora's relapse," wrote Galiani from Naples. "The air of Madrid is too rough; his lungs cannot survive it." This opinion was supported by the famous Lorry, a physician dear to the "women and the wits" of Paris, and so fashionable that, when he was suffering

from the gout, patients came down to consult him at his carriage door. He had already attended Mora in Paris, and in letter after letter and note after note, half in French and half in Latin, he adjured him to leave a pernicious climate and to come promptly and place himself in his skilful hands.

Even these pressing appeals would not, perhaps, have determined the dying man to undertake a long and tiresome journey, had he not been secretly influenced by another motive. Without definite information, and guided only by the intuitive instincts of deep affection, he was vaguely aware of a change in Julie's heart. "I remember," she confesses with tears, "how I dared to form the abominable intention, how I resolved to bring death into my friend's heart, to abandon him, to cease to love him as he yearned to be loved, as he deserved to be loved." Despite this intention, however, she continued to postpone the cruel confession, the results of which could not fail to prove sadly detrimental to one in Mora's feeble condition. But her pen was customarily too free and sincere to be able to hide the perplexity of her soul, and Mora, surprised and anxious, vainly searched her troubled letters for the warmth and enthusiasm which once rewarded his love. "He knew doubt for the first time," writes Julie again; "he passed from anxiety to fear. His letters as well as his heart were full of sadness." Far, however, from discouraging him, this terrible suspicion only strengthened his firm determination to recover his inconstant friend. "This," affirms

Mademoiselle de Lespinasse, "was the great reason which precipitated his departure from Madrid. He risked his life, he tore himself from a family and friends who adored him. He came, he said, to warm again a heart frozen by absence, and to revive a soul disheartened by sadness. He relied upon the warmth of his perfect tenderness to give him strength for this terrible ordeal."

On the 8th of May, Julie writes to Condorcet: "Monsieur de Mora should have started for Paris on the fourth of this month if he kept to his intention of the twenty-fifth of last month. He had then a severe cold, and had coughed blood a few days before, so that I am sure of nothing except of his will and desire in the matter. . . . I must see him to believe in his return." When these lines were written, Mora was already five days advanced on his journey to see her. He left Madrid on May 3rd, accompanied by two servants and his regular physician, Master Navarro. A note, scribbled in the hurry of leaving, informed his friend of the fact: "Madrid, May 3rd, 1774.—I take carriage to see you." In order to avoid the fatigue and jolting of bad roads, he travelled very slowly and by short stages. The first days passed without accident, and hope grew in his heart. "I have that in me to make you forget all your sufferings on my account," he wrote to Julie on the tenth, after a week's travelling; but the same day saw his remaining strength exhausted by renewed hæmorrhage. His journey was now a protracted agony, but he still sought to push on. "Bordeaux, May 23rd,

1774.—Just arrived, and almost dead," was his next message.

It is impossible to describe the dread and horror which overwhelmed Julie's soul when this news reached Paris. Her anguish was such that she could not conceal it even from Guibert. After a nervous attack, which left her almost lifeless for four whole hours, she confessed to him: "I have a sort of fear and terror which unsettles my reason. I await Wednesday, and it seems as if death itself could not quench the pain with which I look for news of the loss that I fear. . . . It is beyond my strength to think that he whom I love, and who loved me, will not be able to hear me, will no longer come to my aid." To Suard, her habitual confidant, she poured out her distress with still greater freedom: "To-morrow's news will perhaps release me from life. This thought is terrible, and never leaves me. I can now see Monsieur de Mora only under the aspect of death." A second note contains still clearer suggestions of suicide, an idea that henceforth possesses her brain: "It seems to me that I have no longer anything to care about. You know what that means, *but you do not know all.* No, I can no longer hope for calm, for peace. . . . You will forgive me that I take small heed of reason and moderation. If I wished to dwell with my fellows, I should have to consider these virtues, but I tell you that I wish to remain but one moment longer in this sad country called Life. Do you need clearer insight into my thoughts, into that which I shall do?"

The dark forebodings of Mademoiselle de Lespinasse were but too well founded. In a room in a Bordeaux inn, the heir of the Fuentès, a gaunt creature racked by suffering, struggled with fierce but vain energy against the doom which denied him the consolation of again beholding his friend. For three whole days Mora wrestled against death, fully conscious all the while. The supreme hour seems to have re-awakened the faith of his youth, for the curé of a neighbouring parish certainly administered the last sacraments to the dying man. On May 27th he collected his failing strength to trace these faltering lines, full of despair and tenderness: "I was on my way to you, and I must die. What a horrible doom! . . . But you have loved me, and the thought of you still gives me happiness. I die for you. . . ."

The Marquis de Mora was buried on the next day, with a certain "pomp," in the now vanished church of Notre Dame de Puy-Paulin. Two rings were removed from his finger—the one containing a strand of Julie's hair, the other of plain gold, engraved with the device "All passes, but love endures." The Duchesse de Villa Hermosa sent the first of these to Mademoiselle de Lespinasse, who afterwards restored it to her by will. Both rings are still among the heirlooms of this noble house.

Mademoiselle de Lespinasse learned the news on Thursday, June 2nd. "I should have been too fortunate," she writes, "could my life have ended on Wednesday, June 1st." Her first cry was that she had killed the man who loved her, that she had

pronounced his "death-warrant," and nothing could afterwards wholly efface this dreadful impression. Remorse added itself ruthlessly to the anguish of her sorrow, and her repentance was not confined to the simple fact of her faithlessness. Of that at least he knew nothing. "My God, to what am I come! how have I fallen! But of that he was ignorant." Her most cruel remorse was evoked by the thought that the unconscious coldness of her letters had shaken the security and confidence of this faithful heart. "What a frightful thought! I have disturbed his last days; and fearing that he had cause to reproach me, he risked his life for me. His last impulse was one of tenderness and love."

All she has suffered since her earliest youth seems to her of no account compared to her despair at this thought. "A moment has made thirty-seven years of suffering as nothing!" Her unsettled brain could see no escape from this intolerable torture except through death. That she indubitably purposed to poison herself is proved by at least a score of passages in her correspondence with Guibert, who was, indeed, a witness to the fact and an actor in the drama. Ambiguous language leaves us in uncertainty as to whether the drug was already taking effect when Guibert's care recalled her to life in spite of herself, or whether he arrived at the exact moment when she was on the point of swallowing the fatal draught, and just in time to snatch it from her lips. In either case, if she owed the prolongation of her life to Guibert, she certainly felt no gratitude on that account. On the contrary, she

afterwards reproached him in the harshest and most bitter terms for his injudicious zeal.

So alarming a condition of weakness followed Julie's fever that Madame Necker's letter of sympathy was answered by d'Alembert thus: "She is unable personally to express to you her appreciation of your kindness. Her health is very poor, and she is in a state of despondency which does not permit her to enjoy even the solace of friendship. I regret upon my own account," he continues, "that sensitive, virtuous, and high-minded man. His memory and my sorrow at his loss will remain graven upon my soul." D'Alembert spoke from the heart; he was second only to Julie in his grief at Mora's untimely end, and the pages in which he describes his own sorrow might be signed by Mademoiselle de Lespinasse. "My deep feeling did not at first permit me to express my personal grief at the loss of this friend, who must ever live in my memory as the most perfect being that I have ever known. . . . His mind always communicated to mine an energy which it will no longer know; but I shall ever remember those priceless moments when a soul so pure, so noble, so strong, and so sweet loved to mingle with mine." Drawn together by this common affliction, Julie and d'Alembert were for a while reunited in something like the touching harmony of their earlier intimacy. With tender gratitude she writes: "Monsieur d'Alembert has, of his own accord, written to Monsieur de Fuentès. He was affected to tears while reading this letter to me, and I was no less moved."

Julie de Lespinasse had been faithless to her friend in his life; no woman was ever more true to the memory of her loved dead than was she to that of the Marquis de Mora. Conscious of guilt towards him, never for a moment did she permit this painful thought to license its consignment to the convenient haven of oblivion, but for ever accused herself before the partaker in her "crime." Compassionate friends, who attributed her sadness to simple regret, irritated her until she was on the point of confessing the bitter truth. Suard paid her a visit of sympathy, and elicited for sole reply a brusque "I am unworthy of your sympathy," an answer of which he could never understand the meaning until the moment, twenty years later, when he read the published volume of her letters to Guibert. The "perfect and holy being" against whom she had sinned became an image ever at hand, would she invoke a more than usually potent instrument of self-abasement; and when Guibert travelled to Bordeaux a few months after Mora's death, he went strictly charged to collect every possible detail of the last painful scenes, that her sorrow might feed itself thereon. Luis Pignatelli, visiting Paris in the following year, was summoned by her, and compelled to relate every incident of his brother's last decline, although Julie's sufferings under this trial were so acute that she was completely prostrated at its conclusion. "His presence killed me; the sound of his voice made me shiver from head to foot. Horror and affection consume me by turns." This horror reached a climax when

an erratic post brought her two letters, delayed these twelve months. Such a message from the grave sounded ominously in morbid ears, which received it as a summons to a new and fleshless meeting.

This dwelling with melancholy memories and lugubrious imaginings kept Julie in a state of excitement bordering on delirium, in the more exalted or depressed hours of which she occasionally seized the pen, once used to trace her letters to Mora, and confided her feelings to "this shade which pursues her." "Do you know the first need of my soul when it has been violently agitated by passion or by sorrow? It is to write to Monsieur de Mora. I reanimate him, I bring him back to life; my heart rests against his, my soul is made part with his; the warmth and vigour of my blood defy death; I see him; he lives, he breathes for me, he hears me! My brain wanders, and is exalted to such a key that thought, no longer a child of the imagination, is made truth itself!" At times she humbly invokes him, and supplicates for pardon: "Friend, if from the realms of death you hear me, be kind to my sorrow, to my repentance. I am guilty, I have sinned, but has not my crime been expiated by my despair? I have lost you, and I live. I live! Is that not sufficient punishment?"

Her letters to Guibert are one long reminiscence of this earlier love. Between her lover and herself she incessantly raises the ghost of Mora, comparing the living with the dead, and always to the advantage of the latter — an unpleasant ordeal,

Guibert's patience under which was surely praiseless. Hardly, from time to time, did he risk timid remonstrance: "Write to me, my friend, even if your letter must be full of Monsieur de Mora." More often, he accepted her as he found her with the patient bearing of a man whose conscience is not wholly clear in respect of the things with which he is thus troubled. That his conscience was not untroubled the sequel will show.

CHAPTER XIII

Shaken health of Mademoiselle de Lespinasse—Consequent ill-temper—Guibert's tactlessness—His mysterious absence—Irritation of Julie and first threats of a rupture between them—Secret interview of Guibert with Madame de Montsauge—Jealous fury of Julie on discovering this—Her withering letter—Breach of several months' duration—Reconciliation, but persistent vexation—Guibert's literary ambitions—Wise counsel from Mademoiselle de Lespinasse—The *Constable* is staged—Julie consoles him for his disappointment—Guibert's projected marriage—Julie believes the scheme abandoned—Unexpected avowal by Guibert—His *fiancée*, Mademoiselle de Courcelles—Julie's despair—Scenes prior to the marriage—Departure of Guibert—The broken ring.

THE year following Mora's death was for Julie de Lespinasse one of tempest and misfortune. The shock of that loss affected a delicate constitution with strange power, and her frail body was racked with terrible suffering. Dizziness, headaches, perpetual insomnia, often proof against enormous doses of opium, nervous spasms, and "convulsions," reduced her vitality to the lowest ebb. Her nerves suffered commensurately. Everything disturbed and wounded her, and aroused her suspicions; never was even she so irritable and moody. Guibert's actions, words, and even his silence, were suspect to a jealousy which now amounted to disease, and needed but the slightest provocation to fall into insinuations, reproaches, and often the tears of anger, abruptly succeeded by transports of tenderness, and the most passionate effusions. "All these contradictions, these conflicting emo-

tions, are real, and are to be explained by these words: I love you." This chance expression of her pen exactly summarises this period of her life.

Julie's temper was then uncertain, yet her complaints were not always unreasonable. Irresistible impulse had absolutely and irretrievably given her over to a man who, alike in his qualities and his defects, was an eminently unsuitable mate for one of her impressionable and exclusive nature. Guibert, not devoid of fine ambitions, was sincerely convinced that heaven had intended him to regenerate his country. Love, after the first moment of excitement, was therefore no more than a secondary preoccupation—a superior enjoyment, a delicate satisfaction, to which, in simple justice, he cannot and must not sacrifice the essential. His affection for Julie, and his admiration for this incomparable mistress, were no less real than was his pride in such a conquest, but he could never hold her entitled to a first claim upon his time. Thus he would often avoid her, evade a meeting, let several days pass without a visit, and neglect to write to her when absent, sometimes for a whole week, be frankly preoccupied in her presence, or follow the thread of his own thought without paying any attention to her. Sometimes, too, he was inconceivably heedless, as when he omitted to seal his letters to her, or mislaid hers unread. That every such offence was noted needs no telling, nor yet that each left its scar; yet they would readily have won pardon as licensed by a genius superior

to the petty demands of the heart. "You know well," Julie once said to him with a sort of pride, "that sensibility is the portion of mediocrity, and your character commands you to be great. Your talents condemn you to celebrity, and the sweet and homely life of tenderness and feeling is not for you. Pleasure, but very little glory, is attached to the living for one end alone." One sin at all times, and this latterly more than ever before, exasperated Julie almost to madness—the thought of any faithlessness, be it never so transient and platonic. Guibert, meanwhile, was notoriously susceptible to feminine society; he hungered for the praise of women, and was a ready victim to their arts. Madame de Montsauge, also, he always held in affection, and at no time really broke off at least friendly relations with her. Such conduct was not easily excused in the eyes of a woman like Julie, and the clumsiness with which Guibert played his part was frequently incredible—endeavouring, as he does, now to conceal his visits to his old mistress, now frankly to discuss her with Julie in terms that could not fail to vex her. But his supreme feat in this direction was reserved to the day when he informed her that Madame de Montsauge had unexpectedly come to see him, and arrived as he was in act to seal an envelope addressed to herself. "Thereupon we talked together for a long time. She complained bitterly of my desertion of her, of my frivolity, and of the new connections that I continually form at her expense. She spoke of ours thus, for she has heard that I see you every

day, and that I pass all my evenings with you. She did not thus reproach me from love or jealousy, but she had counted upon my friendship; her heart's peace was founded upon it; in it she saw happiness for the rest of her life; and she now feels that I am slipping away from her. . . . She was very tender, very affectionate, and very interesting, and neither on her part nor on mine was there the slightest allusion to our past relations. . . . She was full of sense, of philosophy, and of intelligence. I wish that you might have heard her!" Guibert's finishing touch was this little picture of his relations with Julie: "My answers to her questions about you were such as you would have dictated yourself. I told her that I had the greatest possible friendship for you, that no one could see you without the greatest interest, and that this interest was much augmented by the interesting conversation always heard at your house. In fact, my friend, you would have heard me with perfect satisfaction."

These passages are in place, because they accentuate a trait very characteristic of Guibert—that self-confidence, and that species of frank conceit, which are an almost inevitable result of social success. He could scarcely have hurt Julie's pride, or wounded her more, had he laid himself out for the task; and we need not be surprised that scenes and storms were the constant result of such crassness, any more than we should be astonished by the impetuous reconciliations which almost invariably followed, but could not in the end spare her the most

heart-rending anguish. In the middle of July, Guibert surreptitiously left Paris. Julie, much disturbed by this sudden departure, and the mystery surrounding it, at once accused him of desiring "to keep your journey a secret from me. If you went with an honest purpose, why should you fear to tell me of it? And if this journey is an offence against me, why do you take it? You have never really confided in me. . . . I do not know where you are; I am ignorant of what you are doing." On this occasion, Guibert had, as it happens, good cause for silence, for we shall shortly find that his journey was concerned with a half-formed project of marriage. Embarrassed by the part that he was playing, and annoyed by Julie's reproaches, he replied only by a brief note, the ironical coldness of which Mademoiselle de Lespinasse construed as, if not a dismissal, at least a denial of his former vows.

Guibert was evidently in the wrong on this occasion, yet posterity will probably incline to find excuses for an unkindness which moved Julie to this wonderfully eloquent letter, in which disappointed love, wounded pride, and indignant rage clothe themselves in language the fervour of which a hundred years have not availed to cool: "Never in my life, I believe, have I received a more painful, a more blasting impression, than that which your letter has made upon me. Nevertheless, and to be equally truthful, I must needs allow that the kind of injury which you have done me here is worthy of no interest whatever, because it is my

vanity which has suffered, and in a manner entirely new to me. I have felt humiliated and crushed that I should have given to any one the appalling right to say such things to me! . . . My heart, my vanity, everything which animates me, makes me feel, think, or breathe,—the whole of me, in a word,—is revolted, wounded, and for ever estranged. You have given me sufficient strength, not to bear my misery—that seems greater and more overwhelming than ever!—but to ensure me from ever again being tormented or unhappy because of you. Judge, then, both of the excess of my crime and of the greatness of my loss!" At this point, and for the first time, Julie speaks of a possible final breach between them. "If your letter expresses what you really think and feel of me, believe, at least, that I shall not fall so low as to justify myself, or to ask for grace. . . . Here, therefore, we come to an end. Be henceforth with me as you can or as you will. For me in future, if future I have, I shall be with you as I should always have been; and were it not for the remorse which you leave in my soul, I should hope to forget you. . . . Why, then, need I complain? Does not the sick man who is doomed still look forward to the coming of the doctor; still raise his eyes to his, if haply he may there find hope? The last impulse of pain is a groan; the last breath of the soul is a cry!"

Despite the suppressed emotion which escapes in these last lines, Mademoiselle de Lespinasse for a while maintained a firm stand against the repentance of the culprit. "Please to have decency

enough to cease persecuting me," she writes, after his return. "I have but one wish, one need—never again to see you on any other than the common social basis. . . . Leave me; count upon me no longer. If I can calm myself, I shall live; but if you persist, you will soon have to reproach yourself with having given me the strength of despair. Spare me the pain and embarrassment of having to deny you my door during the hours when I am alone." After eight days of this stoical firmness Guibert forced her door, and she fell into his arms. "What a terrible project I had formed! I was never to see you again—so possible an idea! You well know that the hours in which I hate you are those when my love for you has become a passion outrunning all reason."

Some weeks later, Guibert, alleging causes that jealousy itself must credit, announced that he was about to visit the family estates, and that father and mother of whom he was the pride and joy. Never yet had he been more attentive, more affectionate, and more tender than on the eve of this journey. "I am pursued by sad thoughts, and almost every one concerns you," he wrote to Julie. "You are not happy, and your health is failing; you are attached to life only by a feeling to which you have never dared entirely to yield yourself, of which remorse stifles a part, and which absence will perhaps annihilate. I tremble to leave you in this condition, but my father awaits me, and I ought to have set out the week before last. . . . How necessary will your letters be to me! Will mine be

equally so to you? I shall make them as frequent as though they were, but how unsatisfactorily will this occupation bridge the horrible void of your lost society and conversation, and our daily meetings, of which the habit has grown so sweet to me. This interest, with my work, would suffice to fill my life, for near you ambition vanishes. . . . Never has my being been so strongly drawn to another. More violent and more tumultuous emotions I have known, never feelings so sweet as these, nor of a kind upon which I have so built my happiness." A like sentimental note pervades his first letters after leaving her. "The thought of you is constantly with me; it will follow me to-morrow, to-morrow's morrow, and so through every day. Guess what has been my first reading? Three or four of your letters, ensconced in my pocket-book, have escaped your barbarous mistrust! I have kept them without scruple, for—

'Whoso suspicion hath, treason invites.'

Good-bye, my friend; I shall write from Rochambeau, from Chanteloup, from everywhere, for herein lie my consolation, my pleasure, and my need. Be you also punctual for like cause."

Neither this letter nor those which followed it were answered, and Guibert's vexation at this was not abated when, ten days later, he found at Bordeaux a "cold, dry note," in the tone one would use "to a man with whom it was desired to sever all connections." This note dwelt upon no specific grievance, but that it contained disquieting allusions

and hard epithets, very disturbing to Guibert, clearly appears from his reply: "I am neither so *false* nor so *dishonest* as you are pleased to consider me. I have felt drawn to you, but at the same time I have never concealed from you the attachment which still existed between me and another. My struggles, my regret, and my anguish I never sought to veil from your eyes, and this unfortunate position has often driven me to reserves—lies, if you will so to call them, dictated entirely by delicacy. . . . But that which I have so often and so sadly foreseen has now arrived: you have come to hate me." Guibert's conscience palpably suspects the cause of this bitter language, and he was not long allowed to suppose that his fears were baseless. An hour after his departure, Julie learned, by means never disclosed, that while she sat alone in expectation of his farewell call, her lover was passing his evening with Madame de Montsauge. Having unmasked the lie with which he had been fain to cover such suspicious conduct, she resumes: "Thus I saw, and I believed, everything which is most painful to me. I had been deceived; you were guilty; at that very moment, you were abusing my affection! . . . The thought revolted my soul. In the depths of my sorrow, I could no longer love you!" In her first indignation at this discovery, she had vowed to discontinue all intercourse with the traitor, even to leave his letters unopened; and for ten days her resolve had held. Cost what it might, she could now remain silent no longer. She demanded definite explanations and a full confession.

Guibert's reply to this ultimatum was as frank and sincere as it was injudicious and ill-adapted to soothe a wronged heart. "How may I express my pain at the manner in which I have wronged you, for wronged you I have, and I do not attempt to justify myself. I concealed from you the fact that Madame de Montsauge left Paris on Saturday evening for La Bretèche; that I had seen her, and that I was with her until she set out at nine o'clock. Not wishing, as you divined, to come to you from her, I went home. We separated with much emotion on her part; there were even a few tears in my eyes. She said that *this was only friendship*, but that it was a warm and tender friendship which would suffer cruelly did I forget her. . . . I spent a part of the night in examining myself, and in failing to understand myself: I was not cured of my love for her, but you were still very dear to me. . . . My heart is a perfect labyrinth, a maze!" His "lies," he confusedly protests, are "mere reservations"—and reservations so painful that "my face and heart alike make reparation to truth in the very utterance of them." His conclusion, more truthful than full of tact, wounded Julie's sensitiveness to the quick. "But, good Heavens! does not the similarity between your position and mine excite your indulgence? You love me, but your heart is full of Monsieur de Mora, and should I suggest that you surrender that memory of your dead, your heart were rent in twain. My friend, we be strange exemplars of the activity of human hearts!"

Guibert need scarcely have been surprised that

such an exculpation was answered by a withering announcement of irremediable rupture: "How have I been deluded, and driven beyond the bounds of virtue, and even of personal interest! . . . And who, good gods! was the object of this sacrifice? A man who has never belonged to me, and who is so cruel and dishonest as to tell me that he has made me his victim without loving me! After having denied the truth, after having deceived me a thousand times, he takes his barbarous pleasure in proclaiming a truth which debases me and drives me to despair. Is there no vengeance in heaven? Must one only hate and die?" Mademoiselle de Lespinasse forsakes all restraints at last. Her letter passes from fiery invective to bitterest irony, and all in the same torrential strain: "You leave me the sole resource of despair, and for this kindness you tell me that I owe you *indulgence*, boast of the *delicacy* of the feeling in which you deceived me, and lied to me from morning to night. Truly this is a fair cruelty—to suffer a justification which is but the last insult! This passion which you claim draws you so strongly towards one who reciprocates it so little —this great, this involuntary passion, nevertheless allowed you positively to assure another that you were no longer in love with this woman, and that your heart was so absolutely free that your one desire was marriage. These things agree together!" There is no need to transcribe this raging philippic at length. It concludes with the announcement that there shall be no retreat: "Lose this letter according to your amiable habit, or—pray

take your preference !—keep it to read to this person who is so dear to you, and with whom you behave in so delicate a manner. In a word, do with it as you will. I no longer fear anything from a man who was dangerous to me only so long as I believed him virtuous and capable of feeling. Farewell ! If one day I may cost you an hour of regret, or acquaintance with remorse—these shall avenge me."

Still more than this stormy diatribe, later letters forebode that the final breach has come. Two weeks of silence and reflection restored her mental balance, and Julie was better capable of a cool and composed judgment. "Reflection has pulled me together. I have judged both of us, but I have condemned myself alone." She has expected "the impossible" in claiming to hold a young and fascinating man ; and realising the mad arrogance and blindness of that hope, a final effort to free her heart from this insane love has, she believes, succeeded. "I do not mean that I shall ever cease to feel for you the greatest friendship, or to take the greatest interest in your welfare. But my feeling will be reasonable and moderate, and your reciprocating it, if you will, may still yield me some moments of happiness, yet never trouble or torment my soul." While Julie's hand halted on these lines, her will stood firm, and she fully meant each word ; and it were more than human not to feel the communication of her emotion in this touching and dignified farewell to her dream of happiness. "So I pardon each your offence, and abjure, with all the strength and reason still left in me, everything that I have written under

stress of my despair. To-day, I lay in your hands my profession of faith: my promise to you, my pledge to myself, that never again will I exact or expect anything of you. Hold me yet in your friendship, if you may; I will enjoy it peacefully and gratefully. If you do not think me worthy of it, I shall sorrow, but I will not think you unjust. Farewell, my friend. I call you so in simple friendship, but the name is no whit less dear since it can now no longer trouble my heart which breathes it."

These are brave words, but that Mademoiselle de Lespinasse suffered acutely as she used them is clearly to be seen from her letters to Condorcet: "When hearts are weary to the point of crying *What use?* and have not so much as a wish to change this frame of mind; when, without sufficient activity of despair to seek death, a woman realises each evening how fair would be the thought that to-night's sleep should be the end;—then indeed she resigns the right to judge anything; she but cumbers the earth, my friend." Sad unto death she was at this time, but her resolve held fast, despite frequent struggles with self and many an access of the deepest emotion. But a slight indisposition that kept Guibert to his bed for a few days could still move her deeply. "You are ill and have fever. My friend, this awakes, not my interest, but my fear! I seem to bring misfortune to all whom I love." When, also, he declined to accept his dismissal, or made use of expressions more than usually tender, she was thrown back into cruel perplexities: "Direct me! be my guide! I no

longer dare say 'I love you,' for I am utterly at sea. Judge for me, then—in this trouble of my soul, you know me better than I know myself." Mademoiselle de Lespinasse was thus seemingly between two moods when the news of Guibert's imminent return reached her. "I dare not desire your return," she wrote, "but I count the days of your absence." Yet, unfeignedly glad of his return as she was, her joy on seeing him again did not weaken her determination. She received him no less often than before, and counted the hours to his visits with all the old fire, but their intercourse was that of mere friendship. Guibert, astonished and disappointed, endeavoured to obtain more of her, but in vain. "Is love, then, to be ever held a crime? Can you never surrender wholly? must you spend your life in self-torture? . . . Do you not know that love is like the fire, which purifies everything, and dishonour has place there only where no love is." Vain rhetoric; for Julie had never fallen to reason, nor ever could. Unfortunately for her, this was but one, and that not the best, of his weapons. Her trial came when winning accents, an eloquence to charm as magic, and a personality almost magically attractive, were arrayed against her. In truth, however, the real struggle lay with herself—the consuming passion in her own veins, very poison to destroy the soul's peace. Thus one weak hour nullified the resistance of a month, and there was written, to come down to us, a cryptogram that was surely no stern test of the recipient's ingenuity. "I s. . . . n . , t . . , y . . t . . ,

I l . . . y . . ., n . . t . . . y . . i . . . . . m . y . . . . . w . . . a f . . . . . t . . . I n . . . . h . . . . t . k . . . a . . . . T . . . m ., t . . ., m . f . . . . ., t . . . y . . l . . . m .!" (I shall not tell you that I love you, nor that you intoxicated me yesterday with a feeling that I never hoped to know again. Tell me, then, my friend, that you love me!)

From this day was dated a new phase. Henceforward, crushed by the shame of relapse, and the consciousness of what she calls her "cowardice," Julie indulged herself with no more insulting words or cutting recriminations. Jealousy of Madame de Montsauge remained her perpetual torment, but where she reproached and quarrelled before, she now took refuge in a resignation sometimes ironical and always very sad. In such mood she communicated to her volatile friend her knowledge of his week's programme: "Give your mind to this, and listen:—Monday, dinner with Monsieur de Vaines and supper with Madame de Montsauge; Tuesday, dinner at Board of Control and supper with Madame de Montsauge; Wednesday, dinner with Madame Geoffrin and supper with Madame de M.; Thursday, dinner with Count de Crillon and supper with Madame de M.; Friday, dinner with Madame de Châtillon and supper with Madame de M.; Saturday, dinner with Madame de M., to Versailles after dinner, and return on Sunday in time to spend the evening with me." At long intervals the constraint proved too much for her feelings, but no sooner had a word of revolt found utterance

than it was immediately repressed: "You are busier than Providence, for you are responsible for the happiness of two people; first, Madame de Montsauge must be satisfied, then I—but a long way behind, as is reasonable. Should not I say, then, with the Canaanitish woman—I will content me with the crumbs which fall from my master's table! Good friend, this conduct, this tone of the Gospels, is of a humility to satisfy a Christian alone. But I am no aspirant to Heaven. I am not content to be nourished, in this life, by crumbs from any table! Good-bye! If I see you, I shall be overjoyed; if you do not come, I shall say, He fares better than with me. A thought so sweet will surely prove all balm!"

Such violent disputes and almost equally agitating reconciliations as those here outlined were after all mere sad and too frequent episodes in the intercourse of this ill-assorted couple. Calm lies between two storms, and calmer moments saw this pair—intellectualists both, and equally admirers of the beautiful—turn readily to higher questions and nobler and more worthy occupations, in which Mademoiselle de Lespinasse, her soul no longer clouded by passion, proved again the wise and useful friend, the shrewd, keen counsellor whom all admired. In this part and in this case literature was the claimant for her charming gifts of taste, tact, and good sense, and she would doubtless have rendered him most precious service but for the pride, self-satisfaction, and love of flattery which too often annulled the efforts of her clear-

sighted affection. Guibert, in justice, never took her frankness amiss, but asked for, and frequently insisted upon having, her advice: "I love to have you judge me," he says. "You can be critical and yet not wound; your friendship always rubs the edge of the vase with honey." Yet ready as he was to hear advice, never once did he think of following it—conduct that evokes our ready sympathy when Julie breaks out: "I do not know why I tell you all this, for surely I should be discouraged by a man who so listens to what he has not the remotest intention of putting into practice." Guibert's impossible self-conceit must, none the less, be granted some indulgence, for few brains can resist such overwhelming praise as his contemporaries united to heap upon him. At this time he had temporarily exchanged his studies in the art of war for essays in the new field of literature. Periods of peace do not favour an embryo Turenne. Bethinking himself that he would therefore become a new Corneille, he was fully convinced of success when his reading of his first tragedy, "The Constable of Bourbon," in all the fashionable *salons* aroused transports of enthusiasm. Men were electrified, and applauded with all their strength; women swooned; Princes of the Blood Royal, the Duc d'Orléans and Prince de Condé, solicited a private hearing; the Queen herself commanded him to Versailles, and declared herself enraptured by the reading. The extraordinary art and music of his voice undoubtedly counted for something in this success, yet Voltaire fell under its charm in far away Ferney, pro-

nounced it equally a masterpiece, a piece "sparkling with beautiful lines," and "full of genius." The "sublime writer," not for a moment inclined to sleep upon his bed of laurels, immediately undertook another tragedy, of which he expected "marvels." "I am beginning the second act of 'The Gracchi,' and am perfectly satisfied with the first," he modestly announced to Mademoiselle de Lespinasse. "I am conscious of a stupendous wealth of ideas upon this subject; many, indeed, will make your brain reel."

In this concert of exaggerated praise Julie almost alone spoke her mind freely, and told him the truth. Her keen judgment went straight to the weak point in his work—the irremediable defect that mars the qualities of real eloquence and elevation undeniable in all Guibert's writings. Kindly but firmly she reproved his lack of correct form, his inaccuracy in expression, and the careless verse, which give his pompous tirades an off-hand, slovenly, and unfinished air. "Tell me," ran a letter, "whether you are accustoming yourself to making haste slowly, and have persuaded yourself to follow Racine, who fashioned verses with difficulty. My friend, you are to have the pleasure of reading—of re-reading every morning—a scene in this divine music; you will then take a walk, and as you walk you will compose your verses. Your natural talent for deep thought and feeling will ensure that these verses are beautiful." These criticisms Guibert accepted with good grace, and every appearance of accepting their counsel. "You ought to be much pleased with me. I sometimes compose no more than four verses a day, for I

am becoming very particular. All will be well; this is a superb subject!" Habit, however, soon resumed the upper hand, and Julie was again concerned to see his pen rushing along "post-haste." Satisfied of his own greatness, Guibert once indulged in "small and spiteful criticisms" of La Fontaine. "My friend," she returned sharply, "be severe with yourself and for yourself, and show some indulgence toward what is good. Above all, forgive me the truth in this remark!"

In the August of 1775, during the festivities attending Madame Clotilde's marriage, Marie Antoinette commanded a performance of *The Constable* at the Château de Versailles. Among the players were Lekain and Madame Vestris; and the costumes and decorations cost three hundred thousand francs. But Julie flatly refused to attend this celebration, although all Paris was scrambling for a place: "No, I shall not see 'The Constable'—I am unable either to judge or enjoy such scenes—but I shall take the keenest interest in your success, and shall glory in it." Fearing, not without reason, the searching test of the boards, she begged Guibert beforehand never again to take their risks. "I hope that you will return to me to-night," she wrote on the great day, "whether you are covered with glory or disheartened by a moderate success. Above all, whatever the issue to-night, swear that you will never again stage one of your pieces—this piece in especial, for it will be known and judged, and, if ever it come to Paris, lost." Thus, while the world predicted a triumph, she alone doubted. "If you

are on the highest summits of glory, tell me; and if you are not satisfied, tell me that too. Never forget that all which is *you* is more *I* than myself."

The event proved Julie right, and the news of Louis XVI's ill-humour during the performance, of Lekain's poor playing, and of the glacial silence following the fall of the curtain, distressed her more than the author himself. Her sympathetic condolences were infinite, but she was only the more ardent to dissuade him from renewing this dangerous experiment by appealing from the verdict of the Court to that of the general public; and when, emboldened by the encouragement of the Queen, he retouched his piece, changed the ending, and prepared for a new series of performances, Mademoiselle de Lespinasse sought to turn him from this resolution by a letter which is an admirable example of logic, justice, and sound sense, and may well be partially quoted: "I disapprove of the changes in 'The Constable,' and for these reasons. Item—having thus changed about and altered this piece, you will be judged afresh, and with more severity than the first time. This is quite fair, for originally, yielding to the Queen's desire, you staged a play never written for the stage. That fact claimed indulgence for you, won you credit for the many beauties of your piece, and if any one criticised plot or diction he always added, '*This was not written to be acted.*' On the present occasion, however, you set up as an author, and assume corresponding obligations accordingly. You are known to have made changes with a view to the pre-

sentation of the piece; it will even be said that you have induced the Queen to demand the new representation. . . . In any case," she resumes later in her letter, "if you were to permit yourself any change, you should have given all your attention to the purity, elegance, and dignity of the style. Having again heard your piece, people would then have said: 'But I had not realised that it was so well written; there is neither carelessness nor inaccuracy here.' . . . Instead of this, they will find a mass of loose ends, while such changes as you make will surely destroy its real original beauties. . . . My friend, should you slay me, I would still maintain that I am right. But I have spoken. Do as you will; I wash my hands of you; but never think that I shall murmur, as do all these ladies who know how to praise but not how to feel: '*Ah! How beautiful! How these changes improve it! What a success it will have!*' I shall repeat to you a hundred times: 'No, it will not be a success, precisely because it has been changed.'"

Never was prophecy more true. Played before a paying public, the piece fell perfectly flat and never rose again. Chastellux, asked for his opinion next day, found it "horribly changed, although, for the matter of that, even the first representation showed that it was menaced by a serious disease." The *salons* chimed in, and the same people who yesterday praised it to the clouds could not find quips sharp enough for the unfortunate tragedy. Julie hereupon reversed her part, and forthwith defended the piece against its detractors—frantically,

and to the point of risking quarrels with all her most intimate friends, "for," she ingenuously told him, "it seemed to me the height of injustice and insolence that they should dare to judge you. I would have the exclusive right of thinking ill of you!"

Mademoiselle de Lespinasse certainly exhibited rare and beautiful fidelity in thus espousing Guibert's cause and taking his part against every one in his mishap, at the very moment when she was suffering the most cruel and humiliating experience possible to a woman in her position. His projected marriage did not, indeed, come to her as a revelation, for already a year before, in September 1774, the possibility had been forced upon her attention. During the early part of the sojourn which he was then making with his parents, Guibert suddenly interjected a sad picture of the condition of his family into a letter of the most tender protestations: "I am besieged by a thousand small anxieties that poison my pleasure in being at home." Thus prefaced, followed a long list of the cares which overwhelmed him—the edicts of Abbé Terray that threatened his father with ruin; two marriageable sisters, with little or no portions; a mother ill, and anxious about the future; personal debts which "are insensibly increased by each day's life in Paris." This harrowing description concluded with the shaft, thrown out as though at random and by a careless hand: "In my present perplexity, and with this prevision of what awaits me, I have perhaps but one means of escaping my debts, assisting

my family, and placing myself in a position to help them. I must marry. My father has received several good propositions from among our neighbours, but I have refused them all. I would rather die than live in the country." Julie did not permit herself to respond to this lead, so Guibert returned to the subject a few weeks later, and now more definitely still: "My father will not come to Paris until January, as he is nursing a project of marriage which would establish me down there. I tell you this as I shall tell you everything, for you will advise and help me." And, as though he feared this were insufficient, he brusquely adds the suggestion that Julie should select for him this heiress who shall re-establish his fortunes. "If I am obliged to marry, I should like it to be with your help."

If ever Julie de Lespinasse should have rebelled, this would seem to have been the occasion. But, in place of the more violent scene than any yet witnessed, we are to listen to these surprising words: "You will never guess what I am thinking about, and what I desire. I wish to marry *a man who is my friend.* I have a plan which I wish might be successful. . . . There is a young person sixteen years old who has a mother but no father. . . . Upon her marriage she will be given an income of thirteen thousand francs. She may live with her mother as long as she likes, as her brother is still a child. This girl's fortune cannot be less than six hundred thousand francs, and she may be much richer. Would that suit you, my friend? Speak, and we will bestir ourselves." If this affair

fall through, Julie knows of another family who would be "glad to have Guibert for a son-in-law." True, the girl is only eleven years old, "but she is an only child, and she will be very rich." The conclusion to all this is surely justified: "You will acknowledge that the Quietists, and our sensitive Fénelon, could not love God with more self-abnegation!"

The key to this surprising complaisance may be found in the date of this correspondence, which occurred during the time when Mademoiselle de Lespinasse believed herself betrayed, and deserted for Madame de Montsauge. Presumably, it then seemed preferable to yield her lover—if yielded he must be—to a legitimate wife rather than a mistress—an unknown person, rather than the old detested rival. The fears which gave it birth, however, no sooner yielded to a faint hope of reconquering the faithless one than her tone changed, and she used as much eloquence to dissuade him from this plan of matrimony as she had previously devoted to encouraging him. "My friend, I am surer than ever that a man of talent, genius, and ambition should not marry. Marriage is an extinguisher of everything great and brilliant. Men tender and honest enough to make good husbands can be nothing more. Such men are doubtless happy, but nature has destined others to be great and not to be happy. Diderot tells us that when nature makes a man of genius, she waves a torch above his head, saying: 'Be great and be unhappy.' That, I think, was what she said at your birth."

This first alarm was succeeded by six months in which there was no more question of a marriage. Julie, reassured, hoped that it was at an end, when, one evening in March, Guibert let fall a chance word which threw her into the most violent agitation. She controlled herself until he left, but next instant seized a pen and wrote all that which she did not dare to say: "Eleven o'clock in the evening, Tuesday.—Do you remember these words: 'It is not Madame de Montsauge whom you need fear, but . . .,' and the tone in which they were spoken! And the silence which followed! And the reticence and resistance! Ah, does it need all this to bring sorrow and distress to my agitated soul? Add to this your haste to be gone, and shall I wonder for whom you were in such a hurry? Could I be calm? I loved you, I suffered, and I accused myself."

All next day Julie waited for a reply, but Guibert kept silence, neither explaining his ambiguous words nor paying attention to her agonised questions. Such conduct naturally kindled her worst suspicions: certain that some unknown misfortune was impending, she implored the dreaded avowal with tears: "My friend, be honest, I conjure you. Tell me how woman may deserve the truth, and nothing shall be impossible! Listen to the cry of your own soul; you will cease to rend mine. . . . Esteem me enough not to deceive me. I swear by all most dear to me—by you—never to make you repent of confessing the truth. I shall love you for the pain and the shame that you will have spared me. . . . My

friend, think well upon it; you would be very unwise and very dishonest should you let slip this chance of yielding to the desire, to the need of your soul. Believe that, from this moment, you may no longer leave me in ignorance. I have robbed you of every pretext for deceiving me; if now you take advantage of me, you will be more than guilty!"

Pressed and commanded thus, Guibert at last yielded up the fatal secret which was to be her death-blow. His marriage was arranged, and the date almost fixed. Mademoiselle de Courcelles was a young girl of seventeen, pretty, intelligent, rich, and well-born. She was the great-grand-daughter of the celebrated dramatic author Dancourt, and, having literary tastes, professed a tremendous admiration for Count de Guibert. The marriage had, in fact, been planned almost a year earlier, and Guibert's mysterious absence had no other motive than a first meeting. Though the marriage could not take place immediately, it was definitely arranged, and Guibert had long been in constant communication with the family of Courcelles. A note written by him to his future mother-in-law is witness of his intimacy in the house, and of his lover-like impatience: "I much regret that I am engaged. I am going with Mademoiselle de Lespinasse, Monsieur d'Alembert, and I don't know who else, to see Julien's pictures. I am at your service on Friday and Saturday. What a charming time I had with you last evening! How happy I shall be when my life consists of such evenings!"

Julie was long ignorant of these details, for

Guibert represented to her that his marriage was a simple act of reason and convenience, almost forced upon him by his family, and but recently arranged. The blow was none the less terrible, and seemed at first utterly to crush her. "We can no longer love each other," was her first word; the next, "I cannot live." Next day she wrote: "I cannot express all that I suffer, all that I feel; it seems impossible to bear up under it. I feel that my whole being is giving way, and I feel that I need only surrender myself, to die. A long and painful struggle succeeded between her wounded pride which commanded a rupture with Guibert, and her passion which forbade it; by Guibert's entreaties that he may still remain her friend, and her conscientious scruples lest inclination prove too strong for such a new part. "How do you expect me to say whether I shall love you in three months' time? While I am seeing you, while your presence charms my senses and my soul, how should I be able to foretell my feelings about your marriage? My friend, I have no ideas, none at all. . . . My habit of life and of character, my way of being and feeling, my whole existence in a word, make pretence and constraint impossible. . . . I can understand," she continues, "that were you set to create a disposition for me, you would give me a character more suitable to your requirements. One does not ask for hardness and strength in one's victims, but feebleness and submissiveness. Friend, I am capable of all things, except this—to bend. I could suffer martyrdom; I should have strength, I will say it, *to commit crime*, to satisfy my

passion; but I find nothing in me which promises that I shall ever be willing to sacrifice my passion."

Such was her distress and her suffering, that Julie almost wished to hasten the fatal day, if so be the unalterable fact may bring a little calm and repose: "I am waiting for,—I desire your marriage. I am like the sick man who is to be operated upon: he sees his cure in prospect, and forgets the violent means by which he is to gain it. My friend, deliver me from the misfortune of loving you." Signature of the contract on the first of May none the less gave the signal for another crisis of despair: "The sentence is signed, then! God grant that it is pronounced for your happiness, as surely as it is pronounced upon my life! You overwhelm me; I must escape from you if I would recover the strength that you have taken from me. . . . Do nothing more for me. Your goodness and your kindness can only increase my pains." A thousand conflicting feelings and desires tore her soul, until existence was one awful contradiction. One day in May, wild desire seized her to know and see this girl who was so surely both the occasion and the instrument of her torture. Guibert, she knew, expected Madame de Courcelles and her daughter at seven o'clock that evening. She reached the house a few moments before that hour, and installing herself there to await them, terrified the master of the house: "You come to torture me," was upon the point of his tongue; "to spy upon my actions, so as to be able later to steep yourself in gall, and overwhelm me with reproaches." Yet the double visit passed

off delightfully. Julie was affable, gracious, even "caressing" with the young girl: "Heaven's own language is upon her lips!" Mademoiselle de Courcelles was "enchanted" with this reception, and Guibert, astonished, touched, and grateful, was tempted to "fall at her feet," and apologise for his recent temper. His surprise and joy were redoubled by the note which reached him a few moments later: "I find the young person very charming, and worthy of your interest in her; her mother's face, manners, and appearance are equally pleasant and interesting. Yes, you will be happy."

But morning brought a complete change. The grace and beauty of Guibert's chosen bride now exasperated the embittered heart of the deserted woman, who, agonised to the point of injustice, overwhelmed her inconstant friend with an avalanche of reproaches, against which he struggled with justifiable indignation: "Your picture of me and of my conduct is horrible! You rank me with Lovelace, and all the greatest scoundrels! You gratuitously credit me with the intention of tormenting you, of consigning your days to unhappiness, of desiring you to live upon a passion which caters to my vanity. You say that I turn, and re-turn, the dagger in your wound. . . . Thus I revel in your tears, in your convulsions, your desire to die, and in this unfortunate feeling which still binds you to life! . . . I feed upon it; I have the soul of an executioner!" Yet he defended himself with gentleness against these outrageous charges: "I examine myself, I search my heart, and my

heart reassures me. I am not so culpable towards you as you imagine. . . . I love you now, I have loved you, I was carried away by you. I tried to console you. That I would have given, and would still give, my life for you, are my crimes. Read my letters over, judge me, consider all the circumstances, and see whether I am wicked, as you say."

Guibert was sincere enough. He never really understood, and never could understand, the contrasts, the upheavals, and the conflicting emotions of Julie's impetuous heart, for he had no personal contact with so nervous and highly-strung a nature, exalted to the point of folly, sensitive to the point of torture, and utterly different to all others that ever he knew. The coldness, egoism, and "barbarity," of which Julie was accusing him on the very threshold of the tomb, were the natural consequence and effect of perpetual misapprehension. Guibert was absolutely sincere when, some months later, he confessed to Julie the confusion into which she plunged his mind: "Your soul is sometimes so quick and fiery, sometimes so cold and withering, always so sad and so difficult to lead, that one hardly knows how to meet it."

As the weeks passed, and the date set for the wedding approached, Julie's temper became increasingly exalted, more and more devoured by fever. She constantly summoned Guibert to her, yet was as often unable to endure his presence. Each word of affection was then received as an insult: "I want you to know that I am unable to bear protection and compassion; my soul was

not fashioned in such base mould. Your pity gives the finishing touch to my misery; spare me the expression of it. Persuade yourself that you owe me nothing, and that I no longer exist for you."

The wedding-day was fixed for the first of June, at the Château de Courcelles, not far from Gien, on the border of Berri. Here Guibert was to join his affianced bride, ten days before the date of the ceremony. On the eve of his departure, he received a last disconnected and almost incoherent note, in which almost every word amounted to a cry of anguish: "Good-bye; do not come to see me! My soul is panic-stricken, and you can never calm it. You have neither the tender interest which consoles and sustains, nor the goodness and truth which give confidence and repose to a wounded and deeply afflicted soul. Ah! how you hurt me! I ought never to see you again! If you are honest, leave to-morrow after dinner. I shall see you in the morning—more than enough!"

Guibert presented Julie with a parting gift in the guise of a small ring, made for her from a circlet of hair held together by a few threads of gold,—an emblem of his attachment. This simple ornament seemed to her more beautiful and precious than all the diamonds of the king, and the thought of it touched her deeply. As soon as Guibert left her, she put the ring on her finger. "Two hours later, it was broken," she writes. The trifling incident froze her with superstitious horror; she saw in it a mysterious sign, the symbol of her destiny.

CHAPTER XIV

Complicated feelings of Guibert on his marriage—Charming qualities of his wife—Promise of a married idyll—Despair and indignation of Mademoiselle de Lespinasse—Vain attempts to divert her mind—Bitter reproaches to the traitor—Agonised crisis and reaction towards a more quiet mind—She swears their connection shall now be platonic—Heroic resistance to Guibert's pleas—Death now her one desire—Her strength fails, and she neglects herself—Her friends completely ignorant of the cause of trouble—Incredible blindness of d'Alembert—His vexation at her refusal of his efforts—Her sweetness and his devotion—Julie's health fails further, but her passion is undiminished—Sincere grief and tender protestations of Guibert—Sad letters of the lovers—Abel de Vichy arrives—Agony of Mademoiselle de Lespinasse—Her last letter to Guibert—Her death—d'Alembert discovers Julie's passion for Mora—His indignation and despair—He confides in Guibert—Melancholy resignation of his last years.

"My marriage-day—beginning of a new life. Involuntary shudder during the ceremony. I was pledging my liberty and my whole life. My soul has never been distracted by so many thoughts and feelings. What a labyrinth, what an abyss is man's heart! I am lost in the myriad windings of mine. Yet, everything promises happiness. I am marrying a young, pretty, sweet, and sensible woman who loves me, who is made to be loved, and whom I already love." In this hectic strain did Guibert, on the very evening of his marriage-day, confide to his private diary his mixed feelings of anxiety and hope. A week later, the tone was already more joyous: "Days passed like a dream! This new position is, in fact, a dream to me. Loved, friendliest, most candid, and adorable wife!

Her soul unfolds from day to day; I love her, I shall love her, and I feel convinced that I shall be happy." Thenceforward, his conjugal tenderness increased hourly; and when his military duties compelled the first separation from his wife, Guibert's letters to her were rather those of a lover than of a husband. "Nine days without news of you make me feel as if I were a hundred miles away. Silence separates more than distance. . . . Ah! tell me constantly that you love me! I cherish these repetitions—this craving speaks eloquently from my heart. . . . That wretch Lepine has not sent me my watch, but I have your picture. I may say with the Duchesse de Maine: 'The one numbers the hours, the other sweeps them into oblivion.'"

Countess de Guibert, to whose delicate beauty Greuze has given eternal life, was altogether worthy of this passionate affection. Her youth, sweetness, patience, and remarkable intelligence soon enabled her to exercise upon her impetuous husband an influence almost imperceptible at first, but one which grew and endured. She never annoyed him by unwise jealousies, nor, whether in her letters to her mother or to her husband, did she ever mention the name of Mademoiselle de Lespinasse, except on the one occasion when she sent her a letter with the offer of a box at the theatre on her husband's behalf. Although she well knew how that lady disliked herself, to Madame de Montsauge she was always most polite, since Guibert was anxious that they should be friends. "I would like my friends to be yours," he writes to Madame de Guibert; "I would be the

connecting link in this chain." "I would forgive her for hating me, if you loved her less," she answered sweetly; and, without further resistance, she called upon Madame de Montsauge, invited her frequently to supper, and even consented to stay with her in her Château at La Bretèche.

Countess de Guibert possessed yet another and greater virtue in her unmixed, sincere, and undying admiration for her husband. Guibert, to whom praise was a necessity, almost a physical need, could not possibly resist the atmosphere of incense which he constantly breathed at his own hearth. The jealous observation of Mademoiselle de Lespinasse was quick to seize on this, and she wrote with bitter irony of "this family always at his feet, the flattery which, morning and evening, caresses his vanity." "It was by this that she attracted you," she cried; "for this you have submitted to her, and how you will be subjugated for the rest of your life!" Julie's discrimination did not here go astray. As much by her absolute faith in her husband's genius as by her own exquisite qualities, the young wife gradually won and held Guibert's fickle and volatile heart, and when he presently proclaimed his complete submission to this light and pleasant yoke, he confessed what he knew to be the simple truth: "Charming and sweet creature, Heaven has formed you after my heart's wish. To you were given goodness, grace which is more beautiful than beauty, modesty, simplicity, and sense. All these adorn your life. . . . Yes, in a few years you will be a woman

among women—the exclusive object of my worship, and the centre of all my interests. My enemies shall turn pale with envy; seeing my happiness, they shall know that they cannot take it from me!"

While this edifying idyll was in progress, Julie de Lespinasse, alone in her poor Paris lodging, pictured in spirit these scenes so heartrending for her, and almost died for the shame, despair, and remorse. Through eight whole days she mused, as she herself says, "without words or tears," in an appalling silence, interrupted only by convulsive attacks. More than ever did this distress turn her thoughts to Mora. She wrote to him almost every day—to tell him of her misery, to implore his pardon, and to conjure him to cease his vengeance—and these letters to the dead were, for the time, her only correspondence. Ten days after Guibert's departure she received from him a short, cold, and embarrassed note, in which he excused his neglect, and advised her to forget him. The perusal of this missive, acting upon her overwrought nerves, almost crazed her, every word becoming, as she owns, "gall and poison." The inoffensive phrase, "Live, for I am not worth the pain I cause you," enraged her to the point of "suffocation." Reading into it no one knows what hidden insult, if for a moment during her long nights of sleeplessness she fell into a doze, she "awoke with a start of horror at the sound of these terrible words." Refusing to answer this note, for six weeks she did not even open his letters. One thought ceaselessly tormented her fevered brain, and lashed her anger to fury—

Guibert had never loved her; she had been but his plaything and his dupe. The thought took form in these cutting terms: "To-day I see you as you are, for I see that you have done a vile thing. You have dared to reduce me to despair by using me for your pastime—as a means to sever the connection which could not continue after your marriage. To give some appearance of honesty to your dealings with Madame de Montsauge, you have thought it necessary to abase me, and to take from me the only thing still remaining to me, my self-esteem."

That Julie's frail body, already so terribly weakened, was able to bear all this self-torment, and her absolute neglect of her health, seems almost miraculous. She ate almost nothing, spent hours daily in the bath in order to keep down her fever, and drugged her distracted nerves with enormous doses of opium. Hoping to divert her mind, she turned headlong back to her old worldly life, reopened her *salon*, dined in town, and rushed wildly from one entertainment to another. And when all these methods failed to stay the imperative need of relieving her mind, she seized her pen and upbraided Guibert. She at last decided to reopen her correspondence with him, because one day—mechanically, she averred—having opened a package in the post, she found in it his pamphlet *l'Eloge de Catinat* and a letter from the author. Reading it, she determined to reply, but in what a manner and in what a tone! The words "hate" and "vengeance" recur on almost every page, interspersed with cruel

invective. On one page she affects coldness and proud indifference. "Allow me the pride and vengeance which make it a pleasure to tell you that I forgive you, and that it is no longer in your power to teach me fear." Another displays the most crushing disdain: "Your marriage taught me to know your whole soul, and thus alienated and closed mine to you forever. There was a time when I would rather have known you unhappy than despicable. It has passed."

These virulent and excessive insults invite our sympathy rather than blame, so evidently are they the fruit of real suffering, and so horribly reminiscent are they of a death-agony. On the fifteenth of July, Mademoiselle de Lespinasse was overcome by an attack so terrible, by such frightful spasms and terrifying convulsions, that her last hour really seemed at hand. Her hands and arms were "twisted and drawn-up," and her broken words seemed to escape from between her lips: "I shall die . . . go away!" D'Alembert, standing horror-struck at the foot of her bed, cried as if his heart would break, and continually bewailed the absence of Monsieur de Guibert—"the only being who could help you!" These words, she says, recalled her to her senses: "I felt that I must calm myself for the sake of this good man. With a great effort, I told him that a nervous attack had overcome me when already broken by my usual ills." A paroxysm of tears presently calmed her, and the happy chance of the arrival of a post, bringing two letters from Guibert, completed her recovery: "My hands trembled so

that I could hardly hold or open them. But imagine the happiness when the first word that I read was *My friend.* My soul, my lips, my life fastened themselves to the paper. I could not read it, I could only distinguish detached words: 'You give me back my life, I breathe again.' My friend, it was you who gave it to me. Never, no, never, have I felt such tenderness and love."

Mademoiselle de Lespinasse grew much calmer after this crisis. She "will no longer," she "can no longer hate." Little by little she resigned herself to the long-rejected idea that it is possible to own a place in a heart although it is not wholly possessed. The idea of sharing with any one is very distasteful to her, but, in default of perfect love, she henceforward vaguely conceived the possibility of a chaste and innocent affection, and for a time this hope bound her to life: "Yes, we will be virtuous," she cried bravely; "I swear and promise it. Your happiness and your duty shall be sacred to me; I should be horrified should I find in myself any feeling that might trouble them. Good heavens! if one unvirtuous thought were left in me, I should shudder at myself! . . . No, my friend, you will have nothing with which to reproach yourself. . . . You know the strength that passion can give to the soul it rules? To this I promise that I will add the strength given by the love of virtue and by indifference to death, that so I may never interfere with your happiness or your duty. I have thoroughly considered. Love me, and I will have strength to suffer a martyrdom."

Being newly agreed on this basis, Guibert, his conscience at rest, certainly betrayed more tenderness and appeared more attentive than ever. Their parts were reversed; he now appealed to the past and begged for frequent letters, or with unwonted humility craved Julie's indulgence: "I am filled with sorrow and remorse. I feel that all those whom I have loved or do love, and who love me, are unhappy. It seems my destiny to bring misfortune wherever I go. . . . Write me one word, and let that be *My friend*." Julie did not immediately reply, and he wrote again: "I write to you without the hope of a reply, but I shall persist, I shall pursue you with my affection, even should you assure me that it is distasteful to you." Coming to a phrase in which he found the traces of bitterness, his discretion fell yet more away: "The words, *I do not love you, wherever you are*, frighten me. Ah, my friend, I love you wherever I am, and I shall never change." Julie's reception of these protestations frequently suggests her smile of doubt and incredulity: "Is it really true? Do you really need to be loved by me? That does not prove you a man of feeling, but that you are insatiable." Guibert's words, however, were certainly balm to her sick heart, and her pen would wander back to the tender expressions of earlier days: "This simple truth remains—I love you as warmly as if it were your happiness that was sacrificed to my pleasure and peace of mind."

At about this time, Mademoiselle de Lespinasse chanced to meet Madame de Guibert and her mother

in Paris. "I advanced to meet them," she said proudly, "and talked to them of their health and of their talents; in fact, I dare promise that you will hear them call me 'very amiable.' You will not believe a word of it. . . . I became so perfect as to frighten myself. I must be like the swan whose death-song is her best—which is something, after all! You will say, 'Her death is untimely, it is a pity!'" Autumn brought Guibert definitely back to Paris, and Julie received him upon exactly the footing of three years before, at the outset of their acquaintance—frequently, publicly, in an honest intimacy which carried no remorse in its train.

Guibert himself confesses that this new and delicate situation remained untroubled to the end was due to Julie alone. Sitting with her on a November evening when he had brought, at her own request, a package of her old tempestuous letters, he begged the favour of reading them with her. "Never," he afterwards wrote, "did love intoxicate me to such a point! Your letters, those same letters which should have chilled me, my sudden recollection of the past, my hand which sought yours,—after all, what can I say to you? . . . All the fire, all the excitement of passion was in my heart, and you repulsed me with every evidence of hatred and contempt! . . ." Neither violence nor pleas moved Julie, and Guibert fled home, confused, humiliated, and vanquished, thence to write, that same night, repentantly imploring pardon for an hour of madness: "My friend, by what words and by what behaviour can I secure your pardon for the

feelings which carried me away? You accuse me, you condemn me, you hate me, you think me without principles or virtue! . . . I am dying of repentance and regret; I cannot sleep, I am in despair at having displeased you—I cannot say *offended* you, for to offend is to act with intent, and I was so far from that! . . . I shall postpone my journey; I shall throw myself at your feet to-morrow, and ask your forgiveness. I have never deserved it more, and never have you been dearer to me."

They who would look to find Julie's indignation implacable, know little of a woman's heart. She never for a moment weakened in will, or lapsed from her irrevocable decision, but her anger could no sooner cool than she must see in this distracting scene nothing but that Guibert still loved her. Her reply to his letter was therefore as tender as it was troubled: "I do not know in what manner to address you, for I fear even to speak with you. My soul is racked, and I see things as one confused. I no longer know whether crime or virtue works for happiness, nor which is the more painful —remorse or regret. . . . I live, and the reason is as I told you last night—the knowledge of your love for me. Your spirit knows how its power is to sever me from all else in this world. A quarter of an hour, and we two stand alone in life; there is neither past nor present; you are no longer guilty, and I am no longer unhappy."

A less passionate spirit might doubtless have come to content itself with this half-happiness, building upon love's ruins the sweet and enduring

friendship so impossible to this ardent and imperious soul, who herself confessed to knowledge "neither of moderation nor of measure." But when Julie had perceived her duty, she could only sacrifice her happiness to it. The sundered knot could never be retied; the pain of it could kill. Thus the autumn and winter following Guibert's marriage were but one long appeal to the death of which she spoke as of a friend. "Let him but come, and I promise—not to receive him with shrinking, but as my welcome deliverer! . . . I ask myself what I need, what there is for me in the world? I find no answer, unless in that desire of the tired traveller—a place to rest my head—Saint Sulpice for me!" As her strength waned, this cry grew in power: "Let me stay and rest my mind in this much-desired and long-awaited moment of which I feel the approach as it were with rapture."

Mademoiselle de Lespinasse did not speak idly in this. She knew that the spring of her life ran dry, and that the incurable malady which night and day sapped her being had passed "from her soul to her body." The doctor was no less aware of the cause of her terrible wasting. "He repeats that I am devoured by sorrow, that my pulse and my respiration bear witness to active suffering, and he always takes his leave with the saying, 'We have no drugs to cure the soul!'" At this time, however, the doctor had little opportunity even to confess his impotence to cure. Julie preferred to be her own physician, and her one care was to spare herself physical suffering. "Sedatives,"

that is to say soporifics, were her specific, and she used them immoderately, as she pleased, despite the remonstrance of her friends. Countess de Boufflers vigorously attacked her on this score, but without success: "It is a strange thing to find an intelligent person who dreads doctors and not drugs. Do you, then, imagine that they kill with knives? Believe me, their pills are more unpleasant than their presence; and when one takes to physic, it is safer to consult them, for ignorant they may be, yet still know more than we do." No reasoning, however, could influence her, for this conduct was part of the preconceived plan which makes this last phase of her life nothing less than a long-drawn suicide, coldly premeditated and relentlessly accomplished, during which she made all her last arrangements—planning out the details of her burial, carefully indicating what shall be done when she is gone—as "to have her head opened by a charity surgeon." She confided all these dismal wishes to Guibert, who was "frozen with horror." "You must, then, have no feeling for me of any sort," he cried, "thus to bring despair to my soul! You say that you do not do so; that all my sorrows are transient, that my tears even prove nothing—I have shed them so often! Will you not say that they are feigned?"

This idea, indeed, which continually pursued her, was the only fear that clung about the threshold of the tomb. Guibert would soon forget her, and would not mourn her long: "Friend, there is in you nothing either deep or constant. There

are days when the news of my death would hardly produce any impression upon you, and—you see how well I know you—there might be a moment when you would be crushed by it." In spite of physical weakness, her love still filled her heart, strong, indestructible, and triumphant over any suffering. "I am myself only when I see you. Your presence charms away all my ills; you alternately give me fever and cure me of it, so that I hardly know whether I have suffered. When I see you, I need only your love; Heaven is in my soul; I no longer judge you, I forget that you are faulty, I love you!"

It is an astonishing fact that among her innumerable friends not even the most intimate ever suspected the true cause of that wasting which so afflicted their hearts. Attributing her languor, her feebleness, and her pitiable emaciation to her sorrow for Mora's loss, they vied with each other in lecturing her, with affectionate logic, upon the uselessness of these eternal regrets. "You have exaggerated ideas of love," Suard wrote, "which revive feelings that would otherwise fade, and recall to your imagination everything that makes them more bitter and more lasting. Ah, Mademoiselle, I have but one prayer: do not be greater than nature! Allow yourself to respond to what attracts you; do not call to mind your gloomy memories, but console yourself for not being inconsolable." Condorcet, Madame de Boufflers, and her other friends all used like arguments, and filled her with painful humiliation.

"They all believe that Monsieur de Mora's death is killing me. My friend, if they knew that it is you—your marriage that was my death-blow—what horror they would feel for me! how contemptible I should seem to them! Ah, they could not accuse me more loudly than does my own heart." Her self-hatred at this deception kept her continually at the point of revealing her secret. "I do not know how it happens that I have not already twenty times uttered the words which would disclose the secret of my life and of my heart." Yet silent she remained, and her lacerated heart kept its own counsel so well that when, thirty years later, Guibert's widow printed Julie's first letters, Madame Suard had scarcely read ten pages of the book before it had fallen from her hand, and she rushed to her husband, crying: "My friend, she loved Monsieur de Guibert!" Suard, too, could find no words but "I have just discovered it," and the pair were alike overwhelmed with astonishment.

The blindness of d'Alembert is even more incomprehensible, for he lived under the same roof, and followed, almost hour by hour, every phase of her existence. In his passionate tenderness for Mademoiselle de Lespinasse, and with his perfect knowledge of her nature, he could never attribute her suffering to other than purely mental causes; but as he had never believed her feeling for Mora to be more than friendship, he could not, like the others, explain her decline by grief for him. And, also, he had to remark, with bitter

despair, her sudden and complete change of attitude towards him. He was no longer greeted, as during her anxiety for Mora, by coldness and the vacant silence of a person absorbed in sad thoughts, but with a dry bitterness, or—would he approach her—with a drawing back which seemed actual repulsion. Julie accuses herself for this conduct in one of her letters to Guibert. "Did it not seem too ungrateful, I would say that Monsieur d'Alembert's departure would give me a sort of pleasure. His presence weighs upon my soul. He makes me ill at ease with myself; I feel too unworthy of his friendship and his goodness."

D'Alembert's pain at this change in her need not be described. He never complained, but if redoubled care, constant consideration, and indefatigable devotion may win back the heart that slips away, he would have kept this one. The portrait of himself that he presented to Julie at about this time has under it these melancholy lines:—

> "Take thou, in tenderest friendship, this, his face,
> Thy strong stay in all ills who fain would be;
> And whisper, if sometimes thy glance may grace
> Its features: 'Of all those I loved, who so loved
> me as he?'"

Vainly, however, did he rack his brain; for never in the long sleepless nights could he divine the sad truth—not even on the day after Julie's death, when his spirit groaned: "For what reason that I can neither comprehend or suspect did your tender feeling for me change to estrangement and aversion? What was my crime to displease you?

. . . Had you done me some wrong of which I was ignorant, and which it would have been my joy to pardon did I know of it? You told one of my friends, who reproached you for your treatment of me, that the reason of your coldness was that you could not open your heart to me, and let me see the wounds which sapped your life. Twenty times I have been on the point of throwing myself into your arms, and of demanding to know my crime, but I feared lest your arms should spurn mine—outstretched to you. Your look, your speech, even your silence seemed to forbid my approach."

D'Alembert, so far from crediting his friend with an unhappy love, naturally had not the least suspicion of Guibert, whose absence we have already heard him deplore when Julie lay so near to death, and towards whom he always showed especial confidence and sympathy. "Monsieur d'Alembert loves you as though I influenced him," Julie once told her lover with a half-smile, and that lover never left Paris without constantly receiving letters from the philosopher. Is he ill himself, d'Alembert writes anxious inquiries; weakness confines Julie to her room, he keeps Guibert informed as to her condition, himself sometimes carries him letters from the invalid, addressed in his own hand. Such surprising simplicity would seem ridiculous but for the pathos of its absolute faith, self-abnegation, and generous devotion. And this wonderful fidelity endured to the end of his life, for when Marmontel would once have dis-

tracted him from his grief, by a reminder of his friend's ingratitude, there were tears in the voice which replied: "She was altered, but I never."

The already terribly precarious condition of Mademoiselle de Lespinasse did not fail to grow worse with winter. "I am cold, so cold," she says, "that my thermometer is twenty degrees below Réaumur.[1] This supreme cold, and state of perpetual torture, discourage me so absolutely that I have no longer the strength to wish for anything better. . . . I freeze, I tremble, I am dying of cold," she says later; "my heart is so cold, so heavy and painful, that I could say like the mad-woman of Bedlam, 'it suffers as if it would burst.'" The chills which froze the blood in her veins in the evening, were succeeded by a high fever which kept her nightly awake until dawn. Paroxysms of coughing and suffocation, and headaches which make her "half crazy," led to yet more frequent recourse to the dangerous aid of opium, of which she would sometimes take four grains at a time. "Such doses," she says, "calm me as Medusa's head once calmed. I am petrified, incapable of motion, and lost to the use of all my faculties; things pass before me as on the sheet before a magic-lantern—so much so that for two whole hours this afternoon it would have been impossible for me to put names to the faces that I saw. Oh, but it is a strange thing—thus to be dead while still alive!" Twenty times Julie just failed to poison herself with this regimen, and this notwithstanding

[1] *i.e.* Fahrenheit 13° = 19° of frost. This was in January 1776.

the vigorous efforts of her friends—Guibert at their head. "In God's name, and for pity's sake," he adjures her, "if you have ever loved me, do not take that second dose! I could not survive you. . . . Your words make me tremble; this *unknown cold* in your heart. . . . Ah, your speech is Phædra's."

Worst of symptoms was Julie's appalling weakness. Notwithstanding her energy, she was now rarely able to leave her room even for most urgent affairs. "How could I ever get there," she says on one of these occasions, "when it is almost too far from my bed to my armchair! You have no idea of my weakness. I labour merely over this letter, and my ears ring as though I am about to faint." These fits of exhaustion were occasionally followed by short-lived rallies when she was feverishly in need of motion, and grows suddenly hungry. "You do not know the pleasure of eating with passion? Well, that is what I have been doing for twelve or fifteen days, and the doctors, who are ignorant barbarians, pretend that it is a bad symptom for my lungs. Could I only be quit of my cough, they might shake their heads as they please. . . . Never," she resumes again, "have I felt so full of vitality and strength. The silence and solitude of these nights give me an intensity of existence which cannot be described." These ephemeral improvements brought renewed hopes and plans for the future. At one time she was haunted by the idea of moving house in order to be nearer to Guibert, but put an end to this scheme

with feverish haste when she thought him too slow in his conduct of the scheme which she had entrusted to him.

For the rest, though her body languished, her soul remained active and fervent as ever. Her door was necessarily closed to the world in general; but though she received only a limited number of intimates, her graciousness and eloquence in conversation were as remarkable as in the best days of her famous *salon*. "You would find her still interesting and animated despite her suffering and daily increasing weakness," wrote Morellet to Lord Shelburne; "yet a miracle alone could snatch her from death." Illness, again, deadened her heart no more than her mind; she loved Guibert with the same tenderness, the same ardour, and the same bitterness as always. With the same need of seeing him every day, she never tired of imploring his presence. "I ought to have the preference, because—it seems—one is always more attentive at parting: devotion does not then establish a precedent. This is why the dying are always loved and mourned." She apologises, however, for the distressing spectacle that she must offer him. "I die of regret for the manner in which your evening is passed here, while everywhere else you are surrounded by pleasures of every kind. No sacrifices, my friend!"

These last words prove that, if passion still endures, jealousy, its sad corollary, has no more yielded its place before the approach of death. Thoughts of the two women who are to outlast

her, the sometime mistress and the legitimate wife, poison her last moments, and she often attacks Guibert upon the subject of his many attachments, each claiming a turn. "What will you do to-morrow, my friend? Not, of course, what you said that you would do, but what will please the first or the last comer; and that is fair, for my place is between the two. How thankful I would be, might I exile myself from this *trio* before I die. Really, you would make them die of rage, should you tell them the truth. I—old, plain, cross, and dying—figure with all that is amiable and charming in the country! My friend, your taste is bad. I am sorry for you; for I go, but you will remain—bad."

With this sad irony Julie now plays, instead of with the violence of earlier days. Their last quarrel took place in January, and was so terrible that Guibert, having regained his composure on the morrow, feared a fatal resolution as its close. "My friend, what a reply!" he wrote with terror. "I found it awaiting my return, and I shudder at it. I am overcome by the horror of it, and by the fearful state in which I left you. You were pale as death . . . I your executioner! Ah, does one kill what one loves, what one cannot help loving? Will you have me to weep tears of blood for last night's scene? Two words, I beg you, for I cannot breathe!" From this day forward, moved both by fear and compassion, Guibert having vowed to control himself, and to accept everything without revolt, one can but admire the patience with which he kept his resolve. To bitter words and—still

more painful—silent reproaches he now opposed only resignation, repentance, and gentleness. "I feel, I see, I may expect no more from you, my friend. Your heart knows only despair and the longing for death. You are indifferent to everything. Not one kind or gentle word for me has passed your lips for three weeks; your will, more than your weakness, condemns me to this torture. Even yesterday you said that you wished me well, and you added, 'as well as you have done ill to me.' What a wish! . . . You spoke of your health with an accent of despair, as who should upbraid me with it. 'Yes, I suffer, and you are my executioner; I die that I may no more vex your eyes,' you seemed to say." "You affected my soul in a terrible manner yesterday," he resumes, a few weeks later; "your tears, your glance—dim, but never more expressive—will follow me for a long while. You scarcely looked at me, or you would have seen that I was almost as overcome as you yourself; I suffered in your suffering, and I wept with you." Never before had he spoken with such evident warmth and truth. "I think of you ceaselessly; I could kiss the threshold of your door, and I should die of sorrow could it not open to me."

Guibert's continued entreaties and d'Alembert's prayers finally prevailed upon the invalid to summon other aid than that of "the doctor in my street" with whom she had, so far, been contented. They suggested Bordeu, the most famous practitioner of his time, and she resigned herself, "the dagger at her throat," and with no illusions as to the issue of

the consultation. "I see Bordeu to please my friends," she wrote, "and the same friends will presently be groaning at the uselessness of his aid." Bordeu found that her lungs were attacked, and declared her condition to be almost hopeless. "Yet," Guibert reassures her, "he says that if the tension of your soul could be relaxed, if it no longer suffered, you would grow well." The new treatment brought no improvement, and her strength continued to decline rapidly. From April forwards she never left her bed, and the circle of her admitted friends grew more and more restricted. Besides Guibert, who came morning and evening, and d'Alembert, who never left her bedside, she received only Condorcet, Suard, and Madame Geoffrin, who, though just recovering from an attack of apoplexy, half-paralysed, and dying herself, daily dragged her feet to the bedside of her friend. Mademoiselle de Lespinasse was deeply touched by this devotion. "Ah, what a melancholy pleasure I take in seeing her! Ah, it hurts me; I believe her end is nearer than mine. I never could control my tears, and they overcame me while she was here. I was deeply grieved." Early in May, Suard, who was obliged to spend some weeks in England, bade Julie what he knew to be his last and heartbroken farewell. "I do not pity her because she is dying," he wrote to his wife from England, "for life to her has long amounted to no more than a prolongation of suffering; but I regret that she should so suffer, and that she must succumb to untimely death after long-continued pain and despair. This

thought haunts me, and darkens everything for me."

Guibert's anxiety was so great that he could hardly bear to absent himself for a few hours when business called him to Versailles one May day. He returned in the evening, indeed, to learn that the invalid had almost died during the day, and to find a note, entitled her "last testament," each word of which filled him with terror and repentance. "Your last testament! This word makes me tremble. Alas! your letter bears the stamp of death; these sound like the words of the dying. . . . I love you, my friend, I love you; these are words from the depth of my soul; my sobs would interrupt them if you were here." Here, in his turn, Guibert besought her pity: "Your letter crushes me, but really I am not so culpable as you imagine. I have always loved you, I have loved you from the first moment that we met. You are dearer to me than anything else in the world. Yes—I must utter it, for I have searched my heart, and I see that it is my innermost feeling—might I choose between your death and that of any other one person in the world, I could not hesitate."

Time was when such protestations and heart-felt grief would have intoxicated Julie with joy, but the sufferings of her pain-racked body had at last reached the springs of her being, and her voice could only murmur faint thanks. "Truly, I have not strength to hold my pen. All my faculties are occupied with suffering. I have reached that

term of life when it is almost as painful to die as to live. I fear pain too much; the sorrow in my soul has exhausted all my strength. My friend, stand by me; but do not suffer, for that were indeed the worse pain of all."

Mademoiselle de Lespinasse retained her intense sensibility to the end, and no attentions were lost upon her. Thus, when one evening she was in worse case than usual, Guibert sent twice for news during the same night, and this interest touched her to the point of tears. "But that is exactly like you! To send twice in one night! Ah, best and lightest of men! Yes, be calm, I beg of you, or you will but increase my suffering; yours hurts me, oh so badly!" "You beg me to be calm, and you are dying!" he replies, beside himself. "Your day has been dreadful, and your night is going to be dreadful. . . . See a doctor; take milk, since you feel that it may relieve you. I am sending again to inquire after you. It will be half-past eleven or twelve when your answer reaches me. I shall be awake and in tears. . . . Ah, my friend, why will you not see the depths of my heart? You would be touched—you would not allow yourself to die!"

This mournful dialogue continued until the last moment. Letters were now, indeed, their only means of communication, for since her last crisis Julie would not permit Guibert to enter her room. Madame de la Ferté Imbault gives us the reason for this interdiction. "Her features have been twisted and distorted by convulsions, so as to

entirely disfigure her face, and with a last flicker of coquetry, she is reluctant to leave this picture of herself with the one man for whose memory of her she is concerned." Julie, however, compensates him for this rigour by frequent notes, in which she gives free play to her great tenderness. One written on the afternoon of May 11th was doubtless intended to be her last farewell. It breathes a gentle serenity without trace of bitterness, and already one seems to feel in it the peace of the grave. "You are too good, too kind, my friend; you would revive and sustain a soul which is at last succumbing to its burthen of pain. I appreciate what you offer me, but I no longer deserve it. There was a time when to be loved by you was the utmost I could desire. Then I should have sought to live; to-day I seek only to die. . . . I would like to know your future. I would like to know whether you will be happy in your surroundings; you will never be very unhappy in your character or your feelings. . . . Farewell, my friend. If I were to return to life, I should still like to spend it in loving you; but there is no longer time."

A respite of a few days yet remained to her, and these Julie used to complete the regulation of her affairs. Her will appointed d'Alembert as executor of her last wishes, and she wrote him a letter on the 16th of May, to be opened after her death. "I owe you everything; I am so sure of your friendship, that I want to use what strength is left me in enduring a life of which I no longer

hope or fear anything. My misery is without resource as it is without consolation, but I still feel that I ought to make an effort to prolong days that are abhorrent to me. . . ." Here follow directions for the disposal of her manuscripts and private papers, and a codicil containing legacies to her friends. "Farewell, my friend," she concludes; "believe that death brings to me the peace for which I could not hope in life. Always treasure the memory of Monsieur de Mora as the most virtuous, the most affectionate, and the most unfortunate of men. . . . Good-bye! My heart and my soul are deadened by despair, and I have lost the power of expressing any other feeling. My death is but the proof of the way in which I have loved Monsieur de Mora; his proved but too well how much more he responded to my tenderness than ever you imagined. Alas! when you read this, I shall be freed from the burthen which is crushing me. . . . Good-bye, my friend, for ever."

The Marquis de Vichy, summoned by a pressing message to his sister's death-bed, arrived during this week, and remained with her to the end. He was a sincere believer and true Christian, and undertook, in defiance of the rest of her friends, to win back this soul so long alienated from the Church. He has himself testified to his success: "I saw her draw her last breath," he wrote to Count d'Albon, "and I am happy to say that I persuaded her to take all the sacraments, in spite of, and in the face of, the entire Encyclopædia. She died in a Christian spirit." Divine love did not, however, occupy

Julie's heart to the exclusion of profane love, for Guibert engrossed her thoughts until the last hour. Denied her bedside by strict orders, he spent his days in d'Alembert's room, asking for her every minute, imploring that all the doctors in Paris should be consulted, sometimes choked with tears, at others plunged in mute despair. Report of his misery pained Julie terribly, and seemed to drag her back, in spite of herself, to the life which she was departing. In her feverish impatience to die, she even wished herself unloved, so that she might go the more easily.

Julie de Lespinasse was still under the influence of this idea when, at four o'clock in the afternoon of Tuesday the twenty-first of May, she asked for writing materials, and, lifting her hand by a supreme effort, traced a few feeble, but still legible, words to Guibert. Through this short note, last effort of her pen, there vibrates, amidst the obscurities of her already wavering thought, a last echo of that passion which won her an hour of joy and two years of torture. "My friend, I love you! This is a sedative to benumb my pain. You can easily change it to poison, and of all poisons this will be the speediest and most deadly. Alas! living is so very painful that I am ready to implore your pity and generosity in yielding me this assistance. It would end a painful struggle, which else will soon weigh upon your soul. Friend, set my soul at rest! For pity, be cruel this once. I die. Farewell!"

Having written and sealed this note, she called d'Alembert, and in a few indistinct words, more

breathed than articulated, humbly thanked him for his kindness and long devotion, and begged his pardon for her ingratitude. This language, and her affectionate tone, so long unheard by him, emboldened him to question her, and to try to learn at last the secret of her inexplicable behaviour. He asked, however, too late; she no longer had strength "either to speak or to hear," and they could only mingle tears. Towards night she was for a long while unconscious, and, being revived with cordials, opened her eyes and raised herself to ask, with an air of surprise: "Am I still alive?" These were her last words. At two o'clock that night her light breathing stopped, and her sad and ardent heart ceased to beat and to suffer.

The funeral and burial took place on the next day, May 23rd, at the church of Saint-Sulpice. Her will, dated in February, stated that she desired to be buried "like the poor, without being exposed to view in the porch." Her wish was respected, and the ceremony was as simple as it was brief. D'Alembert and Condorcet, who were considered her most intimate friends, were the chief mourners; while Guibert, lost in the crowd, seemed overwhelmed with sorrow. Yet, however sincere and profound his grief, the despairing lover did not kill the man of letters in him. That same night he took his pen, and did not rise until he had finished the long composition—a little diffuse and high-flown in places, but otherwise full of interest, of eloquence, and of fire—subsequently published under the title *L'Eloge d'Eliza.*

D'Alembert was, unfortunately, absorbed in other cares. Julie had put upon him the duty of returning certain letters to their writers; he was to burn all others. Thus sadly occupied, he found a manuscript recital of her love for Mora, and before he could cast it on the fire, his eye had perused a few lines, and the roll slipped from his fingers. Julie, then, had loved Mora; had loved him with unequalled tenderness and with all the strength of her being, with all her mind as with all her soul! And he, d'Alembert, all unsuspecting, had ceased "eight years ago" to be, as he says, "the first object of her affections." To complete his sorrow, among all the packages of letters which he was charged to destroy, there was "in this immense multitude of letters not a single one" from his pen. He was seized by a terrible idea, which possessed him for several months—that for a long time Julie had not loved him, perhaps had never loved him; that, at any rate, he ranked only among the last in her affections, after "ten or twelve others," whom she indisputably preferred to him. All his tenderness, all his care and his sacrifices, he had lavished in vain. For her he had lost "sixteen years of his life."

At first, indignation almost prevailed over his grief. Bewildered and suffocated with anger, and irresistibly in need of relieving his mind and opening his heart to one who could sympathise with his trouble, a supreme irony directed his choice to Guibert. This deplorable accident apart, the letter is affecting in its expression of anguish, of deception, and of melancholy bitterness. " . . . As to

my ungrateful and unhappy friend—the friend of all the world but me—what would I not give, Monsieur, that your friendship for her and for myself were not mistaken when you give me these assurances of her feelings! But, unhappily for me, unhappily even for her memory, the public voice and yours do not accord. I even fear that you will side with the world if I ever have the strength to inform you of the thousand details, unknown to the public as to you, which but too clearly prove that their voice is right. . . . Pity me, Monsieur, that I am forsaken; pity my misery, and the hideous emptiness of the rest of my life! I loved her with a tenderness which leaves me with a need of loving; I have never been first in her affections; I have lost sixteen years of my life, and I am sixty years old. Why can I not die in writing these sad words, and why can they not be graven upon my tomb! . . . Alas! she died persuaded that 'her death would be a relief to me.' This she said to me, two days before her death. Farewell, Monsieur. I am choked, and may write no more! Retain your friendship for me; it would be my consolation, were I capable of being consoled. But all that was mine is lost, and nothing remains for me but to die."

Time healed the philosopher's wrath, and filled its empty place with sorrow. But neither the consolations of his friends, the sympathy of the public, nor the distraction of work could overcome his sadness. "He is badly hit," Condorcet wrote to Turgot. "My whole hope for him now is that his life may prove bearable." In course of time, however,

d'Alembert again went into society, and frequented certain *salons*. But having dazzled auditors by the brilliancy of his conversation, back he would retreat to the hideous loneliness, in which he compared himself to the blind, who are "profoundly sad when alone, but are thought gay by society because the moment when they are with others is to them the only one that may be borne." Therefore, with profound melancholy, but with a peaceful heart, the sanctuary of his memory was from henceforth his shrine wherein to invoke her who, despite her every fault, was for so many years the charm, the interest, and the sweetness of his life. For us—better informed than he as to "his ungrateful and unhappy friend"—who, day by day, have followed the phases of this tortured existence and penetrated the deep recesses of her consciousness—shall we refuse her the indulgence ever ready for those whose inmost souls we know, and whom it is permitted us to judge by their feelings rather than by their actions? Surely she did indeed sin, yet for that sin she paid full measure; and if she suffered greatly, so also did she greatly live. Judging not, therefore, neither let us pity.

THE END